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The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'

Edited by

**Luke Lavan and
Michael Mulryan**

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LATE ANTIQUE 'PAGANISM'

LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

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Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan

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THE END OF THE TEMPLES: TOWARDS A NEW NARRATIVE?

Luke Lavan

INTRODUCTION

The release in 2009/2010 of Alejandro Amenábar's film *Agora*, on the life of the philosopher Hypatia, is a welcome source of attention for late antique studies. The film chronicles, amongst other things, the destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 392, its subsequent conversion into a church, and Hypatia's brutal murder in 415.¹ The Christians who took part in these events are depicted as determined to eradicate pagan cult within the city, by violently imposing their creed on others, and killing those who resist. Although the first half of the film stays close to historical events, overall it exaggerates the degree of polarisation in late 4th c. society: Hypatia is a materialistic atheist, her friend Synesius is a fundamentalist, and all conflicts in the city appear to be about religion: Christians even destroy the famous library of Alexandria—which had in reality long disappeared.² Yet the film does succeed in bringing to a wide audience two events on which a great deal of scholarly attention has been focused. The destruction of the Serapeum, like the death of Hypatia, has long played a central role in illustrating accounts of the end of 'paganism' in the Mediterranean. Modern commentators, since Tolland, Voltaire and Gibbon, have pointed to both events as undoubted examples of Christian intolerance, or indeed fanatical incomprehension, towards the beliefs of those perhaps more cultivated than themselves.³ If a guilty pontiff in the Vatican was ever looking to make a historical apology for

¹ Amenábar (2009). On the date of the Serapeum sack see Hahn (2008) 339–45, which is an English summary of Hahn (2006).

² Library of Alexandria: long gone from the Serapeum according to Amm. Marc. 22.16.2, who visited the city before A.D. 392.

³ Modern commentators on Hypatia: Tolland (1722); see Voltaire (1764) for his fullest comments on Hypatia. For the bibliography on Hypatia, much of which is historical fiction, see Dzielska (1995). For the bibliography on the Serapeum see Hahn

the treatment of 'pagans' in Late Antiquity, then these events would appear to form a suitable focus for reflection.⁴

However, on closer examination, both of these episodes seem to lose some of the wider significance with which they have been endowed by film-makers and scholars. As Haas has demonstrated, the murder of Hypatia (whose religious views are not actually known) can be seen to fit within a long line of ritual executions, reserved for public enemies in the conflict-riven city of Alexandria.⁵ Very similar treatment was given to the bishop George in A.D. 361 and bishop Proterius in A.D. 457. However, this ritual, reserved for the *damnatio* and execution of public enemies, was not particular to Alexandria: it can be seen at Antioch, Constantinople and elsewhere, within Late Antiquity.⁶ Typically, it involved dragging the victim through the streets, their mutilation and murder, and an eventual burning of the body, which was then thrown into a river, perhaps after being carried on a donkey; if an imperial response came it was often moralising but ineffectual, as if the violent rite possessed a pseudo-legal legitimacy. This ritual of public *damnatio* is shocking to us today, yet similar treatment is, in our era, sometimes meted out to political enemies through public executions and displays of bodies. This message of humiliation and death is today diffused not through an elaborate street procession but via television, or through images circulated in the press: this was the fate of Mussolini and his mistress, of Nicolae Ceauşescu and his wife, and of Saddam Hussein and his sons, Uday and Qusay. Although we dislike such scenes, our qualified condemnation of them may betray our real attitudes.

(2008). The destruction of the Serapeum is given pride of place by Gibbon (1781) vol.3, chapter 28 in his account of the end of paganism.

⁴ Whilst fully in agreement with Van Nuffelen (this volume) on the term 'paganism', I will not use inverted commas for the rest of this article, to avoid seeming tiresome.

⁵ Hypatia's death as a ritual of public purification in Alexandria: Haas (1997) 87–90. More recently Hahn (2004) 110–20. George and companions: Amm. Marc. 22.11. Proterius: Evagr. *Hist. eccl.* 2.8.

⁶ Antioch: Domitianus, the praetorian prefect, and Montius, the *quaestor*, under Gallus: Amm. Marc. 14.7.16; *praefectus vigilum*, under Anastasius: Malalas 16.2. Constantinople, 'riff-raff' under Justin I: Malalas 17.8, note *excerpta de insidiis* adds detail; Menas, *praefectus vigilum*: *Chron. Pasc.* (Olympiad 311) A.D. 465; Elpidius, *illustris*: *Chron. Pasc.* (Olympiad 346) A.D. 605; Phocas, Leontius, Bonosus and others: *Chron. Pasc.* (Olympiad 347) A.D. 610, for Africa, under Huneric: Victor Vit. 2.15. I hope to publish my wider study of punishment processions in the near future.

As Haas has shown, ugly communal violence had a long tradition in Alexandria, which also saw conflicts between Jews and Greeks, and between Christian groups themselves. But it is important to note that the conflict that claimed Hypatia's life was political, as described in the early sources for this event (Socrates (early 5th c.) and Damascius (early 6th c.)). References to 'magic' are absent until the account of John of Nikiu in the late 7th c.⁷ Hypatia supported the (Christian) provincial governor Orestes in his conflict with the patriarch, mirroring an earlier the conflict between her bishop-friend Synesius and his own governor Andronicus over the right of asylum, in Ptolemais.⁸ In both cases, the bishops were victorious, though the Alexandrian conflict claimed Hypatia's life. She was killed by a mob, apparently led by a church 'reader' Peter, an event that was deplored by the Christian Socrates, as well as by the pagan Damascius.⁹ It also drew the disapproval of the emperor: a law of A.D. 416 may relate to the disturbances, excluding the notorious *parabalani* (ecclesiastical sick-helpers) from public meetings in Alexandria. Yet, as with the case of George and Proterius, the killers seem to have gone unpunished. It is worth noting that even public lynchings of governors might sometimes be excused by the government, as if such riots were a violent expression of the *vox populi*, though never tolerated when carried out against the emperor or his images.¹⁰

As to the destruction of the Serapeum, we have here a clear case of the desacralisation of a pagan holy place and, later, the establishment

⁷ Political nature of conflict argued by Rougé (1990), Haas (1997) 302–16 and Hahn (2004) 110–20. Earlier sources: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 5.22; *Suda* (Damascius) 'Upsilon' 166. Magic: John of Nikiu *Chronicle* 84.87–103.

⁸ Synesius and Andronicus (A.D. 412–13): Liebeschuetz (1986) and Roques (1987) 191–213. Conflict and excommunication: see Synesius, *Ep.* 57, 58, 79.

⁹ Mob led by church 'reader' Peter: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 5.22. It is not necessary to follow Haas (1997) 314 and prefer the 7th c. account of John of Nikiu *Chronicle* 84.87–103 which has Peter as a 'councillor'. The text we have is a translation in Ethiopic from Arabic, and so the terminology cannot be relied upon.

¹⁰ Lack of action after the death of George: Amm. Marc. 22.10.11, Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.3; after death of Proterius: Evagr. *Hist. eccl.* 2.8–11 describes imperial inquires as only resulting in the exile of Bishop Timothy, although an imperial official was sent 'to chastise' the Alexandrians. Law excluding *parabalani* from public meetings after death of Hypatia: *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.42.2 (A.D. 416). Such murders excused elsewhere: Amm. Marc. 14.7.6 (A.D. 354); Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.9. The *vox populi* sometimes seen as *vox dei* in this period: Rouché (1989) 187–88. Violence against imperial images: see Lavan (this volume) 459, n. 90.

of a church, just outside the compound.¹¹ Although the sequence of events is perhaps less clear than it once was (if we follow Hahn's harsh critique of Rufinus), we can be sure that this destruction was backed by the local imperial authorities, and that the bishop Theophilus provoked the conflict.¹² Admittedly, in the accounts of both Rufinus and Socrates, there had been pagan excesses: the killing of Christians, and according to the former, the armed occupation of the temple. Indeed, other attacks are reported earlier in the century by pagans against churches in the city, resulting in desecration and murder.¹³ Furthermore, an imperial pardon was granted to those involved in the occupation of the Serapeum, according to Rufinus. This seems likely, as, according to Socrates, some of his university professors at Constantinople boasted of having killed Christians in this disturbance. However, the sack of the temple still dealt a disproportionate blow to the pagan community in Alexandria. Today, it is difficult not to feel distaste for the Christian partisans who triumphed and for those who supported them, notably the Patriarch Theophilus. Yet, how representative was this event of the end of the temples? Does it deserve its prominent position in our narratives of religious transition? Are there any parallels with other periods which might allow us to gain a sense of wider perspective of the level of violent conflict over religion in this period? The resolution of these questions is the subject of this paper.

During Late Antiquity, as today, the destruction of the Serapeum was widely considered to be highly significant. Committed pagans saw it as a tragedy, whilst some monastic extremists saw it as a model to be followed: such assaults are unknown to us in Egypt, outside of Alexandria, before this time.¹⁴ Here was the destruction of a famous

¹¹ The sources (including archaeology) disagree about the building of the church: see Dijkstra (this volume) 394, 399.

¹² On the Serapeum destruction, see careful discussion by Hahn (2008) 347–50, based principally on Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.22–23, Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 5.16, and Eunap. *VS* 6.11.

¹³ Pagan attacks on churches in the city: Ath. *epistula encycl.* 3 and 7 (A.D. 339) (not seen) and Ath. *Hist. Ar.* 7 (55–56) (A.D. 356), with Haas (1997) 283–84 and Williams (1997). For pagan anti-Christian riot and murders in the Near-East under Julian see Belayche (2001) 299–303.

¹⁴ Impact of destruction of Serapeum on pagans: Hahn (2008) 338 with references. Temple destructions not known in Egypt before *ca.* 400: see Brakke (2008) 107–108 and Dijkstra (this volume) 397. Not all Egyptian monks felt that attacking temples was acceptable, see the *Apophth. Patr.* Bessarion 4: Brakke (2008) 101–106. It is noteworthy that the pagan Zosimus (Zos. 5.23) saw Theophilus as the person who began assaults on the temples; cf. Hahn (2008) 350. This is not strictly true, however, as Bishop

temple, in one of the largest cities of the empire, amidst factional violence, in which the imperial government had intervened in support of the Christian side. The episode provided an example of what could be done to a major pagan cult site with State support, if the conditions were right. It signalled to pagans everywhere that times had changed, and that they could not rely on help from the authorities if facing determined Christian iconoclasts. From a modern perspective, it seems to be a clear example of religious triumphalism, and to exemplify the intolerance of the times. But was this event really representative of the fate of temples in late antiquity? In this article, I will argue that recent research reveals a substantially different picture, and that, rather, the destruction of the Serapeum owes its prominence in our narratives to its dramatic suitability for religious polemic.

THE END OF THE TEMPLES: EVOLVING SCHOLARLY VIEWS

Until recently, scholarship on the end of classical temples had been strongly influenced by the long study of Deichmann “Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern” (1939) and the persuasive article of Fowden, “Bishops and temples in the eastern Roman empire” (1976). Both of these works presented a view, from texts and archaeology respectively, of a violent and early end to the temples. According to Fowden, temples were destroyed by concerted Christian iconoclasm in the late 4th and early 5th c., and according to Deichmann, they were converted to churches, in a widespread phenomenon reaching across the Mediterranean, around the same time.¹⁵ In their general viewpoint, Deichmann and Fowden have been followed by others such as Trombley, Sauer and sometimes Saradi, although contrary studies have appeared since the 1970s.¹⁶ Fowden based his case on textual

George plundered the Serapeum and a mithraeum almost 40 years earlier: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.2; Julian *Ep.* 60 commented by Hahn (2004) 68–71.

¹⁵ Fowden (1978) 76 (drive against paganism) 78 (destruction of urban temples necessary for bishops to achieve Christianisation). Deichmann (1939) 105–106 (vision of widespread destruction and conversion of temples into churches), 114 (temple conversion as symbol of Church Triumphant).

¹⁶ Continuity of views of Fowden and Deichmann: Trombley (1993–94) vol. 1, 108–47, esp. 122 (temple conversion as final stage in closure of temples) and also 186 (inherent part of rapid change through aggression) and vol. 2 (1994) 382 where temple conversion is critical in mass-conversion: Sauer (2003) 8 (where process seen as widespread), 159 (violence against monuments on a massive scale), Saradi (2006) 355–64,

sources alone, mainly imperial laws, letters of Libanius, ecclesiastical chronicles and saints' *lives*. He drew especially on the *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, which recounts a sudden and violent demolition of temples by a local bishop in A.D. 403, with imperial support. Deichmann examined the remains of temples which had been converted into churches, although the dating of this was often difficult to obtain. He based his overall conclusions more on a general impression drawn from literary sources than from the material remains with which he illustrated his text.

Subsequent scholarship, such as Hanson (1978) and the comprehensive study of Bayliss (2004), has shown that the conversions described by Deichmann are rare, and often much later than he anticipated: Christian churches were more normally set within other structures.¹⁷ Furthermore, neither Deichmann nor Bayliss studied temples which had been left to decay or which were preserved by default or intention. These other temples seem to tell a quite different story, as will be examined shortly. Fowden's work is now also open to criticism, not just for the absence of archaeology, but in his use of textual sources. Serious remarks have been made about the historical reliability of saints' *lives* that deal with temple destruction, especially from Egypt, but also from elsewhere. These have been identified as both exaggerating and inventing the iconoclastic achievements of radical monks, in the service of polemical panegyric.¹⁸ *The Life of St Porphyry*, which often plays a central role in modern narratives of temple destruction, is notoriously problematic. Although it describes events in the reign of Arcadius, the version we have seems to have been written in the later 5th or 6th c. A.D., embellishing an earlier contemporary account.¹⁹ The imperial laws are similarly complex: these highly rhetorical texts, often repeated due to lack of enforcement, tend to represent the world as the govern-

with overview on 356 (attacks and destruction to have occurred 'often'). These works do not fully absorb the different perspectives of the studies in the next footnote.

¹⁷ Temple conversions rare: Hanson (1978). Churches within other structures: Vaes (1984–86) and (1989) and Bayliss (2004) 102.

¹⁸ Saint's *lives* and temple destruction: see Caseau (this volume) 176 and Dijkstra (this volume) 398.

¹⁹ *Life of Porphyry* as major case study: Fowden (1976) 72–76; Trombley (1993–94) vol. 1 187–282, "fullest extant account" on 187; Saradi (2008) 117–21, "most detailed account" on 117. On problems with the text see Peeters (1941), Trombley (1993–94) vol. 1 246–282, Hahn (2004) 202–209, esp. n. 57. A. Lampadaridi is preparing a new edition of this text, using a new Greek manuscript that has not so far been considered: B. Caseau *pers. comm.*

ment wished it to be, even if they mention specific situations and were responding to specific petitions. Straightforward readings of the laws can lead to a grossly distorted image of the period: as thirty years of archaeology has revealed for the economy, rural settlement and urban history of late antiquity. Within religious history, most textual scholars now accept this, although historical accounts often tend to give imperial laws greatest prominence.²⁰

However, not all textual sources are so difficult to draw upon. The ecclesiastical and secular histories used by Fowden and others do seem to provide a more reliable basis for studying the intensity of conflict over temples. These sources reveal a peak in cases of temple destruction, during the late 4th and early 5th c. A.D., especially within Fowden's sample region of the Near East. Although we hardly ever have two independent accounts of the same event, some of the detail they provide is both specific and draws on eye witness accounts. The writings of Libanius, which satisfy both of these criteria, are also invaluable, although they require some caution, as he was a committed defender of temples, who tended to resist any kind of change in the world around him. He is a useful witness to developments in Antioch, a city frequently visited by the court. Unfortunately, none of the sources discussed so far give us an idea of the intensity of change: how frequently temples were destroyed, or converted. For these questions, we really need to turn to material evidence. However, in doing so we have to accept that archaeology may reveal a very different story to the texts, and should not be used merely to illustrate a narrative which is primarily built upon the latter.

Over the last thirty years, scholars have drawn more strongly on archaeology. New impressions have emerged, region by region. Such studies have tended to refute some aspects of the picture presented by Deichmann, often in terms of the chronology and intensity of change. Temple conversions have been excavated and surveyed, although they usually date from long after the period of conflict described in the sources. This pattern is confirmed by essays on Spain, the Aegean Islands, Asia Minor and Egypt published in this volume.²¹ Temple

²⁰ E.g. Trombley (1993–94) 1–97 and Caseau (this volume).

²¹ Temple conversion, regional studies, showing that conversion later than 4th c.: Bayliss (2004), plus *Spain*: Tarraco: Arce (this volume) 203. *Rome*, 7th c.: Ward-Perkins (1984) 90–91; *Italy*, conversion seems to be 6th c.: Sotinel (2000) 268–71; Ward-Perkins (2003) 286–87. *Aegean Islands*: Deligiannakis (this volume) 331 (Gyroula, Naxos, 5th/

destructions have also been identified, although only at a handful of sites. However, authors have sometimes claimed, when reviewing local evidence, that their region is ‘an exception to the general picture’, even in the manuscripts first submitted to this volume.²² One of the most useful aspects of refereeing for this book was to encourage authors to discard such notions, and to use their regional data to challenge established ideas about the end of temples and the later history of Classical paganism. Recently, new empire-wide syntheses of the subject have been attempted, notably by Bayliss, Ward-Perkins and Caseau.²³ However, they have so far only considered aspects of the topic, such as temple demolition, temple conversion, or the reactivation of rural shrines. The time now seems ripe to try to address the general questions of the nature and significance of the end of the temples and what this reveals about religious change in the late antique period.²⁴

COERCION AND THE END OF THE TEMPLES

Although some revisionism does seem inevitable, it would be foolish to ignore good evidence for the *intention* of the late antique clergy to restrict and ultimately destroy pagan cult, and of the attempts of Christian emperors to achieve this through repressive laws. Imperial laws from the early 4th to mid 5th c. famously give us a dramatic view of radical Christian ambition in Late Antiquity: first sacrifices were banned (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.2 (A.D. 341)), under pain of death (16.10.6 (A.D. 356)); then temples were closed (16.10.4 (A.D. 346/54/56)); cult was prohibited in private (16.10.12 (A.D. 392)); and finally a general destruction was ordered (16.10.24 (A.D. 435)), some twenty years after the death

early 6th c. A.D.); 332 (Palatia, Naxos 5th c.); 335 (Kalymnos, 5th c.) *Asia Minor*: 3 out of 6 indirect temple to church ‘conversions’ are late 5th or 6th c. A.D.: Talloen and Vercauteren (this volume) 364–68; all 7 cases of dated ‘direct’ temple conversion are from the second half of the 5th c. or 6th c. in date: 368–72. *Egypt*: church building in or near temples is 6th c. in his sample region: Dijkstra (this volume) 430; Temple of Amun at Luxor, churches on the temple precinct, from end of 6th c.: 404.

²² So-called exceptions to the general picture: for Greece see comments of Trombley (1993–94) vol. 1 117–18 on Spieser (1976).

²³ Fresh overviews of the end of the temples: e.g. Bayliss (2004); Ward-Perkins (2003) 285–90 and Caseau (2004).

²⁴ This article was conceived before the appearance of Hahn, Emmel and Gotter (2008a) and addresses similar issues, though from a more archaeological point of view, despite agreeing with many of their sentiments.

of Hypatia. It can be said that sometimes the laws are qualified and specific, with concessions to protect festivals (16.10.3 (A.D. 346/42), 16.10.8 (A.D. 382)), art works (16.10.15 (A.D. 399)) and architecture (16.10.18 (A.D. 399)), whilst a law of 423 (16.10.24) threatens property confiscation against molesters of 'Jews and pagans who live quietly and do not violate law or order'. However, on other occasions, the laws are very severe and even ugly, to us today: they seek the comprehensive eradication of pagan rite, even forbidding the suspension of wreaths to *penates*, or the binding of trees with fillets (16.10.12 (A.D. 392)).

On the effectiveness of the laws, we can note that public sacrifice definitely ended under the emperor's nose, in Constantinople or Antioch and in other centres which the court visited regularly, under Constantius (who did not sacrifice at the Capitol in Rome), and from Theodosius onwards.²⁵ In this volume, Caseau (p.120) makes a good case that laws against sacrifice did have a measurable effect on the imperial elite, preventing them from engaging in such acts. Here, suspicion of magic and divination was based on measures to counter treason. But away from the imperial court, these measures do not seem to have been really effective or enduring, as frequent repetitions of the laws demonstrate, and even the laws themselves confess.²⁶ Elsewhere, sacrifice did continue to the end of the 4th c., even under Constantius, as Delmaire has noted.²⁷ However, from 392, we do not hear of public sacrifices taking place in cities, outside the interior of Lebanon-Syria, except in times of political unrest, and in some frontier communities.²⁸

²⁵ Lib. *Or.* 30.33–37 (A.D. 386 according to Norman) implies that sacrifice continues at Rome and Alexandria, (though not Antioch), under Theodosius.

²⁶ Repetitions of the laws: e.g. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.11 (A.D. 391), 16.10.13 (A.D. 395) (which complains about earlier decrees being disregarded); 16.10.22 (A.D. 423); 16.10.23 (A.D. 423).

²⁷ Caseau (this volume) 117 considers that sacrifices attested after A.D., when laws were issued against worshipping images and making sacrifices, imply lack of universal implementation, whilst Delmaire (2004) 327 thinks it is because some types of sacrifices were permitted.

²⁸ Public sacrifice in Lebanon-Syria interior: Harl (1990) 14, n. 28. Public sacrifice in times of political unrest, under Eugenius, in Amb. *Ep.* 58 to Eugenius; Rome, public sacrifices requested but denied during sack of 410: Zos. 5.41 (he says not one pagan dared to follow ancestral custom, but allowed in private by Pope Innocent); Caria, during revolt of Illus (cities not specified): Zac. *V. Sev.* p. 40. Frontier survivals: Philae, Egypt: Procop. *Pers.* 1.19.34–37 (A.D. 535–37), though Dijkstra (this volume) 425–27 prefers shortly after A.D. 456/57 as an end date for full cult of Isis, based on inscriptions. Augila, in Oasis, Egypt: Temple of Zeus Ammon and Alexander the Great with sacrifices until Justinian: Procop. *Aed.* 6.2.14–20. Ghirza, Tripolitania: Brogan and Smith (1984) 80–92 (mid 4th c temple, used into 7th c. A.D.).

Whilst we do know that lives were lost around the court, we do not so far have attestations of judicial killings elsewhere, before the time of Tiberius Constantine (A.D. 574–82): under this emperor, executions of pagans were carried out for sacrifice offences in Heliopolis, Edessa and Antioch.²⁹ Admittedly, around A.D. 400, there were some centrally planned initiatives to send out imperial officials, or proxies, charged with the closure or destruction of major centres of pagan cult.³⁰ The laws perhaps also provided encouragement to radical monks working without official support, such as those whom Libanius described destroying rural temples at this time, which he emphasised was illegal.³¹ However, there are good reasons to think that neither the laws, nor acts outside the law, had the impact envisaged by Fowden or Deichmann.

As a result of recent work, can be stated with confidence, that temples were neither widely converted into churches nor widely demolished in Late Antiquity. According to Bayliss' study, only around 120 temples are known to have been converted into churches, from all types of sources, in the whole empire, and only a third of these can be dated, by whatever means, to earlier than the late 5th c.³² Significantly, attested incidents of destruction/desecration seem to have reached a peak at the end of the 4th c., when strident anti-pagan laws were issued: this has been confirmed by Bayliss, drawing on all sources of temple desecration, both textual and archaeological.³³ Yet evidence of desacralisation or active architectural destruction of temples from any source is still very rare in terms of the thousands of temples known around the Roman empire. In his empire-wide study, Bayliss located only 43 cases, of which a mere 4 were archaeologically confirmed (1 case of desacralisation, 3 of destruction, including 1 by earthquake). As Dijkstra has pointed out, Bayliss' small number of cases seems tiny compared with the number of temples where there is no evidence for

²⁹ Executions in Heliopolis, Edessa and Antioch (under Tiberius Constantine): Joh. Eph. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.27–30.

³⁰ Imperial officials to Carthage: August. *De civ. D.* 18.54 (A.D. 399); to Gaza: *V. Porph.* 27 (ca. A.D. 398). Monks with imperial constitutions sent to Phoenicia by John Chrysostom: Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.29. Maternus Cynegius praetorian prefect (384–88) pushing actions across the East, esp. Syria: Matthews (1967); Gassowska (1982).

³¹ Monks acting against temples: Lib. *Or.* 30.9 (Syria).

³² Temples converted into churches: Bayliss (2004) 32–49, 50–57 (specifically on chronology), 107–20, 126–29 (listing), 144–45 (figs. 4–5).

³³ Temple destruction/desacralisation at maximum at the end of the 4th and very early 5th c.: Bayliss (2004) 16.

either destruction or desacralisation.³⁴ Goodman's review of work on Gallic (urban and rural) shrines provides us with a relative figure for destruction: if one accepts all potential claims (several of which are very shaky), only 2.4% of all known temples in Gaul have evidence of being destroyed by violence (17 out of *ca.* 711), although such destructions were concentrated in the late 4th c. and after.³⁵ In Africa, only the city of Cyrene has produced good evidence (the burning of several temples), whilst work in Asia Minor has produced just one weak candidate (undated), and in Greece the only strong example may relate to a barbarian rather than a Christian raid. Finally, Egypt has produced no archaeologically-confirmed temple destructions at all dating from this period, with the exception of the Serapeum, a situation paralleled in Spain. For Italy, we have only a single burning. Britain has produced the most evidence, with 2 Romano-Celtic temples out of 40, listed by Lewis, being burnt in the 4th c., whilst another was deliberately destroyed, with its mosaics smashed.³⁶

The number of possible cases has recently been reduced by critical examination, especially as carried out by Bayliss. Sometimes, as at Ephesus and Sabratha, the destruction of the temples coincides with rebuilding after major earthquakes, at different times in the 4th c.³⁷ Following such events, temple blocks were incorporated into rebuilt secular structures as part of single large-scale building campaigns, during which a decision not to rebuild pagan shrines had been taken. Elsewhere, incremental recycling was the cause of demolition, with no

³⁴ List of cases: Bayliss (2004) 16–25, 124–25, 143, fig. 3. Other temples not affected: Dijkstra (2005).

³⁵ Temple destruction, Gaul: Goodman (this volume) 117–18.

³⁶ Temple destruction, Africa (including on this occasion Cyrenaica): see Sears (this volume) 246–48 (all cases of violence against temples come from literary sources, with the exception of Cyrene) for which see 248. Asia Minor: see Talloen and Vercauteren (this volume) 354 with Temple of Men at Antioch in Pisidia on 325, where votive steles inside the *temenos* were smashed, and the temple was dismantled (no evidence for date). Greece: Saradi (this volume) 302: temple and oracle of Aphrodite Erykine (Soteria) in NW Arcadia has evidence of desecration but a lack of crosses. Germany: see Sauer (2003) 55–58 for examples of sanctuary destruction in areas annexed by barbarians in 3rd c. Egypt: Dijkstra (this volume) 408–409, drawing on Grossmann (1995) and (2008). On the Serapeum, see McKenzie (2007) 245–57. Spain: see Arce (this volume) 202–204, with my comments in the main text below. Italy: Ward-Perkins (1984) 85, Sotinel (2000), and especially Goddard (2006) 305–307, citing the example of a Minerva temple in Breno, as well as a single lararium in Castel Gubbio, both apparently early 5th c., without further details. Britain: see Lewis (1966) 52–54.

³⁷ Destruction of temples after major earthquakes: on Sabratha see Sears (this volume) 245 and on Ephesus see Talloen and Vercauteren (this volume) 356.

evidence of destruction or desecration. This has been well-described for Egypt by Dijkstra. At Sagalassos, one temple was dismantled stone by stone, and re-erected on a different part of the site; another was found with its blocks dismantled and used to make unmonumental structures encroaching on the *temenos*. Such spoliation might happen long after temples closed: at Rome, some bronze roof tiles survived until the 7th c.³⁸ However, even the remaining catalogue of potential cases of destruction is still, outside of Gaul, a very weak one. Unfortunately, Bayliss greatly reduces the value of his impressive list by failing to provide full support for the presented dates of his temple destructions (or conversions). Archaeological dating is available in a few cases, as for the destruction of the Temple of Zeus at Cyrene, or the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias.³⁹ Yet, in other cases, destruction is based on nothing more than speculation (as Bayliss admits), and it is likely that some cases of undated destruction date from earlier or later than Late Antiquity, being the result of civil conflict (as at Cyrene) or external invasion (as in Germany).⁴⁰

This volume includes a number of hypothetical examples of ‘temple assaults’ which certainly do not inspire confidence. A cross carved on a column of the Temple of Concordia in Merida is seen a sign of conflict (p. 205), in the absence of any burning or defacement. The carving of crosses and Christian symbols on a 5th c. church at Eleusis on temple spolia (p. 283) is seen as evidence of temple destruction, although we have no indication of when the crosses were carved, even if the church does date from the 5th c. From Sagalassos (p. 352), an *eis theos* graffito, on a dedication to Demeter, is thought to record a temple destruction, although it could have been written when the slab was reused as a 6th c.

³⁸ Recycling in Egypt: see Dijkstra (this volume) 409, with 407 and 420. Sagalassos, temple (of Dionysus) re-erected and another (Antoninus Pius) with blocks reused on the spot: see Talloen and Vercauteren (this volume) 356 and 368. Rome, bronze tiles recycled in 7th c.: *Lib. Pont.* 1.323, 343 discussed by Ward-Perkins (1984) 90.

³⁹ Zeus temple at Cyrene: fire destruction apparently post-dating earthquake tentatively attributed to mid 4th c., along with smashing of idol: Sears (this volume) 248. Conversion of the Aphrodite temple at Aphrodisias dated by inscriptions (TAQ) and pottery found in apse (TPQ): see references in Talloen and Vercauteren (this volume) 368.

⁴⁰ Deconsecration and destruction based on speculation in 8 cases in Bayliss’ catalogue (2004) 124–25, with stimulating commentary 23–25. Deconsecration and demolition earlier or later than conflict period: Caseau (this volume) 497–98.

drain cover at a focal point on the upper agora.⁴¹ From the same city, we are asked to believe that 4th c. damage to a library mosaic recording the departure of Achilles for the Trojan War (p. 354) was anti-pagan, although there is no evidence it was a controversial theme during the period. Finally, small crosses on the Temple of Apollo are interpreted as symbols designed to expel demons (p. 355). Although such an interpretation is founded in literature of the period, it has to be noted that they are liberally inscribed throughout the streets and squares of this city and many others in the region, during this period.⁴² Whilst I must apologise for questioning my own authors, it has to be admitted that our evidence for attacks on temples is often very shaky, and a clearer idea of such actions might result from reducing our short list still further to just a handful of sites in the Mediterranean basin.

This lack of evidence for serious physical destruction cannot simply be taken as a problem of archaeological visibility: there are thousands of temple sites, and the evidence is not hard to find for other episodes of conflict. Burning can be detected on well-preserved Mediterranean public buildings, as it is for the Basilica Aemilia in the early 5th c., for the civil basilica of Ephesus at around the same time, or in the church and triangular tower of Middle Byzantine Amorium.⁴³ Burning is confirmed for the temples of Cyrene, and ought to be found widely, if the statements of Deichmann and Fowden are correct.⁴⁴ As Bayliss has noted, a specific and highly effective technique of temple destruction is documented in the writings of Theodoret of Cyrrus: a scaffold was set under the colonnades, permitting the columns to be undercut, after which the scaffold was burned, causing the exterior structure to

⁴¹ *Eis theos*: Trombley has noted that these inscriptions are especially common in later 4th–5th c. in Syria, but such a simple formula could well be later: Trombley (1993–94) 247, 313–315. Di Segni (1994) 106; Peterson (1926) 276–99. The columns of the nearby nymphaea contain many religious graffiti of the period: author's site observation 2004–2006.

⁴² Crosses inscribed on streets and squares of Sagalassos and many others in the region: Lavan (2008) 207–209. Crosses are known cut on lintels of a bouleuterion (at Ephesus) and city gates (e.g. at Aphrodisias) as well as on church lintels.

⁴³ Burning on the Basilica Aemilia: Reece (1982); Bauer (1996) 82–83; on the civil basilica of Ephesus: Alzinger (1972–75) 295; Alzinger (1970) 1634–36; on buildings of Amorium, with further references: Ivison (2007) 49–51.

⁴⁴ Temple destruction: Deichmann (1939) 110, relating to Egypt; Fowden (1976) 63 (“extensive campaign”) 70: two temples destroyed and substituted by Theophilus in Egypt “among, we may imagine, many others”.

collapse.⁴⁵ This technique, which would also have left unmistakable traces, has only been documented at one site in Greece and another in Asia Minor (both undated). At the latter site it seems to have been undertaken to recycle the clamps within the columns. Neither site has produced traces of burning, in contrast to a temple from Cyrene, which shows clear evidence of undercutting columns, dating from the Jewish revolt of A.D. 115, and burning, dating probably to the 4th c.⁴⁶ Given the physical evidence for historical events such as the Umayyad reform of the images, the Parliamentary slighting of English castles or the extensive destruction of religious buildings in revolutionary France, it is necessary to swallow hard: we must rule out most of the images of destruction conjured by Theodosius II's law demolishing temples or by hagiographic accounts of temple raids.⁴⁷ In time, more disciplined archaeological work may expand the list of confirmed archaeological cases of destruction, to perhaps double the number we have now. Nevertheless, it will probably never reach even a twentieth of all temples active in the Early Roman period.

If this is true, what does it mean for our understanding of saints' *lives*, such as those of Porphyry or Shenoute, from which impressions of widespread temple-destruction come? We can certainly say that after A.D. 400, especially in Egypt, radical monks, along with their biographers, wished to promote attacks on temples, almost as a rite of passage for an ascetic leader. Perhaps we need to distinguish between the psychological impact of occasional temple destruction and its actual frequency in Late Antiquity. However, there is still a strong critique to be done on the hagiographic sources, in which temple destruction became something of a *topos*.⁴⁸ At one end of the spectrum, we have

⁴⁵ Temple destruction by scaffold undercutting: Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.9. See Bayliss (2004) 22–23, 146 fig. 6.

⁴⁶ Undercutting at Nemea, Greece: see Saradi (this volume) 302; at Letoon, Asia Minor: see Hansen (1991) 334–40. Cyrene, see Goodchild, Reynolds *et al.* (1958) 33–34, 39–40, commented by Bayliss (2004) 23.

⁴⁷ Umayyad image reform and impact on churches: Bowersock (2006) 91–111. English castles: Thompson (1987) 138–57. Religious buildings destroyed on a large scale in revolutionary France: for Paris see Fierro (1989); for Douai, where 4 out of 6 churches were demolished, and all religious houses suppressed, see Demolon, Halbout, Louis and Louis-Vanbauce (1990) 41, esp. contrast situation before and after revolution on 67–68.

⁴⁸ Temple destruction as a *topos* in saints' *lives*: Hahn (2001); Gotter (2008) and other contributions in the same volume. See Goodman (this volume) 176 and Dijkstra (this volume) 399–400.

the *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*. Despite its hagiographical stereotypes and the prominent persons within it, who cannot be identified by other sources (including Porphyry and imperial officials), the topography of Gaza is credible, and the sequence of events comparable to accounts of the fall of the Serapeum and other late 4th c. temple destructions. Although the *life* may have been embellished, it seems unlikely that the text, even if drawn into its present form in the 6th c., does not derive in part from a contemporary account.

At the other end of the spectrum, we have Egyptian monastic *lives*, such as the *Life of Moses*. In this volume, Dijkstra is able to disprove some of their assertions (as at Philae) and to reveal the tendentious character of many hagiographic temple destructions, often written long after the event: in these accounts, pagans sacrifice children and temples are still staffed by 30 priests in the late 5th/early 6th c.⁴⁹ Even the achievements of Shenoute of Atripe (known to us from a *life* written sometime after A.D. 465, and from his own writings) have been challenged: despite his bombast, this monk only appears to have managed two temple destructions, and a squabble with an ‘Arian’ governor, whose garden ornaments he objected to.⁵⁰ Whilst these writings may contain interesting perspectives, sometimes relating to specific events, the general impressions they give may be misleading.⁵¹

Of course, the absence of traces could be because little architectural destruction was involved. There could have been desecration, rather than demolition: altars could have been removed and statues could have been defaced, without any Christian crosses being carved or burning taking place. Certainly we hear of such events, which might have had a great psychological impact, as they did at the Serapeum.⁵²

⁴⁹ Disproving assertions of monastic *lives*: Dijkstra (this volume) 427–29 for fictitious temple profaning account in *Life of Aaron* for Philae; see 399–400 for the formulaic character of Egyptian saints’ *lives* in general. The *Panegyric on Macarius* (6th c. or later) has Shenoute’s successor Besa setting fire to a still-functioning temple to Kothos in a village at which children are sacrificed. The *Life of Moses* (written after ca. 550) has the abbot of a monastery at Abydos destroying a Temple of Apollo, and four other temples, killing thirty priests in the late 5th/early 6th c., commented by Dijkstra (this volume) 398.

⁵⁰ Revision of activities of Shenoute of Atripe: see Emmel (2008), and Dijkstra (this volume) 396–97.

⁵¹ See Saradi and esp. Frankfurter (2008) on the “ideology of destruction” as mentioned on 115.

⁵² Psychological impact: see esp. Trombley (1993–94) vol. 1 108–68, Frankfurter (2008) and Hahn (2008) 338–39.

Yet archaeology is still capable of detecting such activities: Sauer's study, for cult rooms of Mithras, has highlighted a handful of destruction deposits with deliberately mutilated statuary, and other forms of image damage.⁵³ Whilst this was the fate of very few mithraea, and only one of these is definitely 4th c. in date, it seems that this represents a real trace of desecration. We know from a range of textual sources (ecclesiastical histories, chronicles and letters) that mithraea were targeted by iconoclasts (Christian or other).⁵⁴ In Gaul, archaeology has demonstrated that half of all known temple destructions (of whatever date) relate to mithraea (admittedly including destructions in the 3rd c. and earlier). This pattern is reflected in 4th–6th c. evidence from less well-studied regions: Bayliss, drawing on a mix of sources for the whole empire, noted that 7 out of the 43 destructions related to temples of Mithras, again more than for any other deity.⁵⁵ This suggests that Gaul is not dissimilar to other regions. Thus, despite generic problems of archaeological visibility, the rarity of desacralisation deposits found both in well-recorded Gaul and on poorly-recorded Mediterranean sites is probably a real reflection of the rarity of violent desacralisation events. The vast majority of temples were apparently not treated in this way.

This is not to say that desacralisation cannot be demonstrated at all, away from mithraea. At Naron, an imperial cult temple has produced a sealed destruction layer, dated by pottery to the later 4th c., with a number of decapitated imperial statues.⁵⁶ However, at present, there are comparatively few non-mithraic temple sites with such unambiguous image damage, which are well-dated. Most examples are poorly dated, such as the defaced carvings seen in Egyptian temples: such damage could as easily have happened under the Umayyads, when so many churches in the Near East had to remove representations of

⁵³ Two sites with severely damaged statues are well-dated, Sarrebourg and Koenigshoffen, with abandonment TPQs of 395 and 235 from coins and inscriptions respectively, whilst a mithraeum in Rome, backfilled around A.D. 400, had face damage to frescoes: Sauer (2003) 78–88, 135.

⁵⁴ Mithraea targeted: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.2, 5.16 (exposure of Mithraic caches at Alexandria by both George and Theophilus—one hopes there is no mistaken duplication by S.); Jer. *Ep.* 107.2 (destruction of mithraeum with statues, at Rome, A.D. 376/77).

⁵⁵ Mithraea in Gaul: Goodman (this volume) 180, commenting on Sauer (1996). Mithraea elsewhere: Bayliss (2004) 17, chapt 1.

⁵⁶ Decapitated statues at Naron: Marin (2001) esp. 91, n. 27 and (2004) 283–84, with Bonačić Mandinić M. (2004) for coins.

living creatures.⁵⁷ Evidence of iconoclasm on religious statues away from temples is similarly problematic, even if we apply the rigorous identification rules laid down by Sauer.⁵⁸ Dated contexts with smashed statues or buried statues are known from Greece, but few of these would satisfy him. Corinth presents some convincing though undated examples: a colossal head bearing a radiate crown with its face chiselled away; pieces marked with crosses; and a decapitated herm with a cross cut onto its genitals.⁵⁹ But most buried statues have to be set aside from evidence of conflict. Caseau, following Coates-Stephens, points out that statue reuse inside walls is already known from dated contexts in the 3rd c., and cannot be connected to Christianity, but rather to indifference to sculpture. Statues were also sometimes buried as protective talismans, or as part of the end-use rituals of a sanctuary rather than its destruction.⁶⁰ Only decades of stratigraphic excavation, and careful examination of statue damage, will increase our knowledge, and reveal if there is a peak in iconoclasm in the key period of the late 4th and early 5th c., or if more damage occurred in the 6th–7th c., when society was more thoroughly Christianised.

We would especially like to know what percentage of cult statues were removed from temples, and when. We cannot yet answer the first question, as archaeology has not recovered enough sealed destruction deposits unaffected by later robbing. However, we do know the dates of some statue removals.⁶¹ Epigraphy provides an answer for

⁵⁷ Defaced carvings in Egyptian temples: Dijkstra (this volume) 398. Umayyad iconoclasm and churches: Bowersock (2006) 91–111.

⁵⁸ Religious iconoclasm identification rules: Sauer (2003) 38.

⁵⁹ Statues in Greece, see Saradi (this volume) 294–99. Problems: e.g. *op. cit.* 295 at Messene, statues were found buried ‘in fragments’, but these do not show distinctive evidence of iconoclasm: N. Tsivikis pers. comm.

⁶⁰ Statues in 3rd c. walls: Caseau (this volume) 497–98, drawing on Coates-Stephens (2007). Statues buried as talismans: see Lavan (this volume) 448 and 456. End-use rituals: see Gerard (this volume) 558, 568 for the concept of ‘closure deposits’ (burying items on leaving a settlement); for religious examples, a British temple site (Uley Park) has a head of Mercury carefully buried in a slab-covered pit: Woodward and Leach (1993) 70–75. Seventeen buried altars excavated in 1870 at Roman fort of Maryport, in Cumbria, are the subject of new excavations in 2011: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/historical/news/item/digging-deep-to-uncover-altars-secrets-copy-copy> (last accessed March 2011). Careful burial of statues in London mithraeum before reuse: Shepherd (1998) 161–79. Some Mediterranean statue burials might also be explained by the end of use of a sacred site, regardless of the cause: see Caseau (this volume) 491.

⁶¹ I do not want to go into the significance of Constantine’s despoliation of the temples and their treasures, which was not the only source of gold behind his coinage, as Hendy (1985) 284–85 has noted. We should be sceptical that Constantine led a

Italy and Africa, as texts do for Constantinople, which describe the arrival of famous works of art, including divine images which came from temples, to decorate the streets of Constantine's new capital. In Italy and Africa, the transfers occurred in the mid-4th c to the early 5th c., whilst, in Constantinople, Bassett argues that most of these types of statues arrived in the city between 324 and 327, and between 379 and 420, based on their architectural context and the decorative coherence of their new settings.⁶² The exhortation of the early 5th c. poet Prudentius, to save these works of art, is famously reflected in inscriptions from Africa and central Italy. For example, the forum of Ostia has a statue base which records how a prefect of the grain supply set up a new statue on the forum *translatam ex sordentibus locis*.⁶³ Such transfers were probably occurring in the context of the temple desacralisation, as revealed by *Cod. Theod.* 15.10.15. Libanius' speech in defence of the temples (*Or.* 30.22) provides a specific example of a bronze statue torn to pieces during such an event. Yet there is no reason to think that statue removals always involved iconoclasm: they were likely carried out by masons working for cultivated governors rather than by a Christian mob. To assert otherwise, we need to find smashed fragments within dated layers, ideally with evidence of selective image defacement or inscribed crosses. This is known, but is still exceptionally rare.

With so little evidence of violent conflict, it is likely that most temples only experienced the removal of their valuable votive ornaments, if and when local civic protection ended, or when a patron lost interest in protecting a private shrine. However, we need not think that every temple was comprehensively stripped by an army of monks, in the dramatic manner described by Libanius in *Or.* 30.8. Some could have

comprehensive campaign of idol desecration and removal on the basis only of Euseb. *V. Const.* 3.54. Survivals of statues in major temples into the late 4th and 5th c. (see below) mean this is an exaggeration.

⁶² Movement of cult statues out of temples: for Italy and Africa see Lepelley (1994); for Cple see Bassett (2004). Statues of Cple with direct textual evidence for date of transfer: Palladion (Malalas 321 *Chron. Pasc.* 1.528, Procop. *Goth.* 1.15), Kybele from Kyzikos in the Basilica (Zos. 2.31), the Dioscurii of the Hippodrome (Zos. 2.31), Athena and Zeus before the Augusteion Senate (Zos. 5.23), the Muses from Helicon in the Augusteion Senate (Them. *Or.* 17, Zos. 5.23), two Apollo statues with other cult statues (Euseb. *V. Const.* 3.54), Alexander the Great in the Strategion (*Patria* 2.59). Zosimus notes that several statues brought by Constantine came from temples: Zos. 5.23.

⁶³ Italy: Prudentius *Contr. Symmach.* 1.501–505 (ca. A.D. 405). Ostia: *CIL* 14 S. 4721 = *AE* (1914) 159.

kept their decoration as part of the grand setting for light-footed official secular uses. We hear of the *secreton* of the praetorian prefect at Constantinople, in the Temple of Aphrodite; a tax office reusing a shrine at Antioch; and a library supposedly set up inside a temple of Trajan in the same city, by Julian. Finally, an inscription from Abthugni informs us of an imperially-sanctioned reuse of *capitolia*, which has left no structural trace.⁶⁴ Yet in other cases, we hear of survivals of ornaments within entirely disused temples. From Rome, we can recall the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, which kept its gilded bronze roof tiles until A.D. 455, and the Pantheon and Temple of Venus and Rome, which kept them until the 7th c., or the Temple of Peace, which still had its bronze doors in the mid 6th c.⁶⁵ Significantly, this temple still held a cult statue behind its rust-fastened entrance, providing an urban parallel to statues seen at sanctuaries in Gaul, at Luxeuil les Bains in 590, and at Losne in the 7th c., and earlier, inside temples in Phrygia and at Edessa.⁶⁶ A few such temples could have been kept closed, but watched over, like disused rural churches in England today. Yet many unmodified temples were probably just ignored in a dysfunctional limbo, open to rough sleepers and children. As city councils had neither the courage nor initiative to reuse them, they were just abandoned, becoming progressively more dangerous to enter, through lack of repair.⁶⁷

Finding well-dated archaeology to match abandonment and passive neglect is difficult. Yet it has been done, not only in Gaul, but also in the Mediterranean. At Elephantine in Egypt we know that houses for temple personnel within the Temple of Khnum were abandoned

⁶⁴ Secular reuse of temples: Cplé, *secreton* of PPO: Malalas 13.39. Antioch, tax office: conversion recommended by Lib. *Or.* 30.42. Antioch, library later burnt by Jovian: *Suda* 'Iota' 401, Joh. Ant. fr. 181 (*FHG* 4.606). Neither Libanius nor Ammianus mention the event, nor any temple of Trajan in the city. Abthugni: *CIL* 8 supplement i. 11205 = *CIL* 8. 928 (after A.D. 388–92); Lepelley (1981) vol. 2, 265–67.

⁶⁵ Temples of Rome preserved: Procop. *Vand.* 1.1.5; Procop. *Goth.* 1.25.18–25; *Lib. Pont.* 1.323, 343, cf. Ward-Perkins (1984) 90. The tiles of the temple of Jupiter were later restored: see n. 84.

⁶⁶ Statue survival in temples in Gaul: Goodman (this volume) 174. Temple with statues surviving behind closed doors at Merum in Phrygia, reopened under Julian: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.15. Edessa: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 (A.D. 382).

⁶⁷ For a general idea of the 'gap' between temple closure and demolition or ecclesiastical reuse see Bayliss (2004) 58–64, where he stresses secular reuse and (like Saradi (1990) 53–56) Christian avoidance of resident demons. Yet regional patterns of temple survival suggest that, whilst fear of demons could have been a factor, aesthetic conservation better explains the preservation of empty buildings.

in or before the 4th c. At Scythopolis, a temple in the city centre was encroached by a water pipe by A.D. 395–404, whilst, at Caesarea Philippi, the sanctuary of Pan was abandoned in the middle of the 5th c. A.D. At Sagalassos, the end of use of the Temple of Divine Hadrian and Antoninus Pius is dated to the late 4th c., from ceramics recovered from within an encroachment structure, whilst temple conversions here date from the late 5th and 6th c., giving room for a potential ‘gap’ between closure and reuse.⁶⁸ Significantly, the religious epigraphy in the same city provides evidence of passive neglect. Here, the distribution of inscribed stones has been greatly modified by active rearrangement during Late Antiquity, in the streets and squares of the city, before it was largely abandoned in the early 7th c. A.D. Around the main squares, Christian crosses have been carefully inscribed on many secular monuments. Altars and religious texts are absent from the Upper Agora, and an altar has been removed from the Tychaion. But in the surrounding sanctuaries, altars were just found lying about the *temenoi*, or reused in the immediate vicinity of the buildings, suggesting indifference rather than active desecralisation. Furthermore, the general restriction of temple spolia, at Sagalassos, to only public building projects and the larger churches, not houses and shops, implies that redundant buildings were being curated by the council as dormant public assets, sleepily awaiting future use, out of the hands of private initiative.⁶⁹ Archaeological reports rarely feature such evidence of abandonment and passive neglect. But given that this evidence is far more subtle than traces of destruction and desecration, it is likely to be under-represented. Future excavations on temple sites must now attempt to detect the chronology and character of abandonment, as much as desecration or reuse.

The amount of evidence for positive abandonment will surely increase in the next decade. However, there is another significant change to temples for which there is considerable evidence, albeit negative. It is the lack of any archaeological or epigraphic attesta-

⁶⁸ Temple abandonment, *Elephantine*: Dijkstra (this volume) 417–19 drawing on Arnold (2003) 20–21 not seen. *Scythopolis*: (TAQ from epigraphy) Tsafirir and Foerster (1997) 109–110. *Caesarea Philippi*: Caseau (this volume) 495, drawing on Friedland (1999). *Sagalassos*: Talloen (this volume) 355 with Waelkens and Talloen (2004) 427–28.

⁶⁹ Sagalassos epigraphic context: unpublished survey work by author 2005–2007. I exclude the reused Demeter text discussed above.

tion of cult continuity on unaltered urban temple sites in the 5th c., across the Mediterranean. This strongly suggests widespread closure.⁷⁰ The phenomenon can be seen for example in Goddard's review of occupation on temple sites in Italy, outside of Rome: only 5 out of 37 sites have occupation evidence after 400, and these sites reveal little positive religious activity.⁷¹ What makes the absence of urban cult so significant is that there was a very different trend for rural sanctuaries (best studied for Britain, Gaul and Greece), where evidence of continued occupation, and sometimes cult activities, persisted into the 5th c. Thus, it seems that we can talk of a widespread closure of urban temples, not only passively (as happened to rural temples in the 3rd c., or to baths and other duplicate public buildings in the 4th c. cities) but through enforced closure in the late 4th and early 5th c.⁷² The non-hagiographical literary sources do seem to support the idea that public pagan sacrifices, processions and public assemblies came to an end in cities, with the exception of festival meetings.⁷³ Devotional activities are sometimes attested in the 5th c., but in private, and especially outside of the city.⁷⁴ Perhaps, historians who have sought to trace dramatic events of destruction and desecration have underestimated the significance of simple closure as the key event of the period. Cultic closure amounted to the exclusion of the pagan priesthood from civic leadership, and the removal of public sacrificial rituals, designed to protect political business, which late 4th c. pagans were insistent should not be neglected. Thus, closure was a major change, which deserves to be registered more strongly by historians, as it seems to have been more

⁷⁰ Here I exclude cult activities carried out in houses at Athens (Saradi (this volume) 277–79) or at alternative informal cult sites as seen at Corinth, even over two ruined temples from which votive lamps of 4th–5th c. date have been recovered: Rothaus (2000) 47–49.

⁷¹ Italy occupation evidence, entitled 'disuse' by Goddard, although he does not indicate his stratigraphic reasons for claiming a change in occupation type: Goddard (2006) 305–307.

⁷² Rural sanctuaries, increase in occupation: in *Greece* with votive lamps and coins, into the 5th c.: Caseau (2004) 134–36. Possibly in *Italy* (Bagno di Romagna): Sotinel (2000) 264. *Britain*: Lewis (1966). Spring offerings elsewhere: Sauer (this volume) esp. 527–28. Non-violent end to rural shrines in Gaul during 3rd c.: Goodman (this volume) 169. Duplicate public buildings abandoned: e.g. Baths of Antioch: Malalas 13.3, 13.30; Fora/ agorai: Lavan (2006) 236.

⁷³ End of public pagan processions in cities: see below n. 126. Festivals n. 120, 126.

⁷⁴ Devotional activities in private and outside the city: Frankfurter (1998) and n. 93.

widespread than any other process. This great rupture with the past does seem to have occurred in most cities of the empire by A.D. 400.⁷⁵

Thus imperial laws did have some impact. The imperial elite had to be spotless in relation to pagan cult; it was not safe to sacrifice, even in private, for fear of being caught up in treason charges, which carried the death penalty. Yet what happened in the countryside, or in distant non-conforming cities, was very different. Temples were closed and a few were desecrated, though most were ignored and left to rot, if an immediate pragmatic use could not be found. Violent architectural destruction or the conversion of temples into churches was very rare. It was generally confined to a few major centres, where a dramatic point was being made. Those governors who did move against paganism, by systematically destroying temples, seem to have been conducting short-lived crusades, of their own or imperial making; one might normally expect half-hearted measures and some indifference.⁷⁶ There was no systematic programme to eradicate temples, pursued with the rigour of the anti-Christian measures of the 3rd c., or of Late Medieval and Reformation campaigns against religious dissenters: in the end, only public ceremonies within cities seems to have been stopped. Imperial and ecclesiastical ambitions against pagan cult away from the public life of the cities were far less effective, as we will explore shortly.

THE PROBLEM OF REGIONAL VARIATION

Regardless of the overall fate of temples, the way in which they were treated varied greatly according to region, as Bayliss' recent overview of the subject noted.⁷⁷ In the West, temple destruction is rare, conversions are late (late 6th c., not 4th c.), and there is even evidence for aesthetic preservation of disused structures. Temples were still built anew in 4th c. Italy and were repaired in 4th c. Africa, until the later

⁷⁵ I do not deal here with the complex issue of the confiscation of temple estates, which may be less significant to the fate of temples than earlier thought: see Goddard (2006) 282–86 for new perspectives.

⁷⁶ Conversely, for a short-lived personal campaign by one isolated governor who restored 4 temples in A.D. 364–67, see Sears (this volume) 235.

⁷⁷ Regional variation: Bayliss (2004) 26–29.

360s.⁷⁸ Greece follows some of the same patterns, of aesthetic preservation and late temple conversion, although there is some evidence for desacralisation. Asia Minor shows a mixed pattern of passive neglect, pragmatic spoliation and occasional destruction. The Levant is not without examples of preservation (Edessa, Scythopolis, Neapolis), and passive neglect (Gerasa). However, the region seems to have been a hot spot of temple destruction: 21 out of 43 cases of temple destruction/desecration cited by Bayliss come from this zone (here including Cilicia). In the Egyptian diocese (7 cases), examples are confined to Alexandria and Cyrene, completing a Levantine ‘arc’ of destruction.⁷⁹

At one end of the scale, in regions such as Africa, Greece, and Italy, temple preservation seems to have been a more prominent process than temple destruction.⁸⁰ We have examples of well-preserved temples that were admired by both Christians and pagans as urban ornaments, and stood as prominent parts of the urban fabric within city centres, only being converted into churches very late in the period. It seems that aesthetic conservation, rather than fear of demons residing in temples, was a primary reason for retaining these buildings, as the incidence of preservation is strongly regional in character, and coincides well with evidence of concern for former temples.⁸¹ Whilst there is no positive evidence of repair from the late 4th c. in Africa or from the early 5th c. in Italy (outside of Rome), there were laws issued to both regions, concerned to protect temples from spoliation.⁸² Furthermore, in literary and epigraphic sources, there is abundant

⁷⁸ Temples in Italy: Ward-Perkins (1984) 85–91; Sotinel (2000); Goddard (2006) esp. 295, 303–304. For other regions, see the essays in this volume.

⁷⁹ Temples in the Levant: Ward-Perkins (2003) 287–89. For destruction see accounts in Fowden (1976), plus Bayliss (2004) 124–25. Edessa, preservation of statues for artistic reasons approved by law: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 (A.D. 382). Scythopolis, temple *pronaos* preserved though *naos* demolished at undated time, a phenomenon seen elsewhere in the Levant: Tsafirir and Foerster (1997) 111. Neapolis, survival of temple reflected in a shorthand image for city in mosaic from Umm Er-Rasas: Duval (1994) 165–207. Passive neglect: the Temple of Artemis at Gerasa, apparently left unused, whilst the *propylaea* were converted into a church: Crowfoot (1935) not seen.

⁸⁰ On temple preservation in general, see Saradi (1990), along with Ward-Perkins (1984).

⁸¹ This is not to say there was no such fear; it is attested for statues reused in public settings (Saradi (1990) 55–56) as well as temples (Trombley (1993–94) 99–108; Bayliss (2004) 59–61; Saradi (2006) 362–63 and (2008) 125–33). Rather, patterns of preservation known to date correspond better with other factors.

⁸² Anti-spoliation laws: e.g. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3 (A.D. 342); Symmachus *Relat.* 21 (A.D. 384); *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 (A.D. 399) = *Cod. Iust.* 1.11.3; *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.17 (A.D. 399); Maj. *Nov.* 4 (A.D. 458); Cassiod. *Var.* 3.31 (A.D. 510/11) commented

evidence for Italy and Africa of a desire to retain temples as ornaments of the past, and even to ensure that statue removals were carefully done, as Lepelley has demonstrated.⁸³ It is notable that temples survive better in Southern Gaul, North Africa and Italy than elsewhere in the empire. At Rome, this is partly the result of deliberate preservation, over two hundred years before church-conversion offered permanent protection. Uniquely in the empire, deconsecrated temples are known to have been repaired here during the 5th and early 6th c.⁸⁴

To emphasise this point, there is archaeological evidence from Africa and Greece for groups of non-original statues within temples, apparently set aside as museums. Such statues have been found in the Temple of Apollo at Bulla Regia, where the courtyard of the temple was filled with diverse images of pagan gods, not originally fitting this setting, but brought in from elsewhere. At Olympia, something similar seems to have taken place, but with confirmation of secondary display: bronze statues were erected without bases between the columns on the south side of the Temple of Zeus.⁸⁵ These two sites seem to be equivalent to civic museums, as conceived by *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 (A.D. 382), and described by Palladas in *Anth. Graec.* 9.528.⁸⁶ They testify to a positive desire to invest in at least a few temples as exemplars of classical culture. However, even in Italy and Africa, it is likely that only one temple per city ever took on this role: if statuary was to be concentrated, other temples must have been left empty. Sometimes, the 'museum' might have been a closed store, more like a dump, as at Caesarea Philippi.⁸⁷ Many cities preferred to re-display these statues in public baths, nymphaea or in civic squares: finds of such statue groups

with further references in Lepelley (1994) 8–9; Ward-Perkins (1984) 89–90; Coates-Stephens (2003); Brenk (1987) 107 and Liverani (2004) 424–25.

⁸³ Temples as ornaments of the past: Saradi (1990) 50–53; Lepelley (1994).

⁸⁴ *Area sacra* in Largo Argentina restored, A.D. 425–455: *CIL* 6.41396 = *AE* (1948) 98. Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus restored A.D. 493–526: *CIL* 6.40807 = 1794 = *ILS* 825. Statue of Minerva restored outside senate, A.D. 472/73: *CIL* 6.526, 1664 = *ILS* 3132.

⁸⁵ Temples as museums, with additional statuary from elsewhere, at Bulla Regia see Lepelley (1994) 12–13, with references; at Olympia, Temple of Zeus: Sinn (2004) 230.

⁸⁶ See study of Lepelley (1994).

⁸⁷ Dumps: the sanctuary of Pan at Caesarea Philippi may represent a dump, perhaps from Early Islamic iconoclasm: the statues found in the sanctuary of Pan seem to be dumped, in the hall and on the street front, in a somewhat haphazard fashion, in a layer dating to the Early Muslim period: Friedland (1999), cf. Caseau (this volume) 495.

suggest that temple museums were not common, even when preservation is taken into account.⁸⁸

In the 'Greater Levant' region, including Cilicia and Cyrenaica, destruction and violent deconsecration do seem to be more prominent. This is a region in which the substantial architectural survival of temples is rare, although sometimes the exterior colonnade is preserved whilst the *cella* has been razed. Only two sites have produced archaeologically-dated evidence of temple destruction, and another an epigraphic *terminus post quem*. However, there is undated archaeological evidence of comprehensive temple removal (rather than conversion) for major temple sites at Caesarea and Scythopolis, and accounts from reliable textual sources of assaults on sanctuaries at Antioch, Jerusalem, Palmyra and Alexandria.⁸⁹ If we add the vivid details of the *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, as Fowden did, destruction and humiliation appear to be more prominent here than anywhere else. The construction of major churches over the top of demolished temples, from the time of Constantine, is also a distinctive feature of this area, although most of it is later than the late 4th/early 5th c. period of conflict. Finally, even if we minimise the extent of temple destruction in this region, we should accept that attacks on temples, especially major sanctuaries, were both politically and psychologically significant here.

Whatever the true scale of 'preservation', versus 'destruction', versus 'passive' decay, in the Levant, there is clearly a lot to explain in the difference between the fate of temples in this region and in Africa, Greece or Italy. As Bayliss notes, the significance of this regional variation is that it is no longer possible to argue for a universal 'fall of the temples', or their 'conversion into churches', as part of a single process of imperially-sponsored coercion.⁹⁰ Whatever the overall success or failure of imperial legislation, its differing impact must be explained by other factors. There were regions in which inter-religious relationships did include a level of violent conflict and those in which there was significant co-existence.

⁸⁸ Former cult statues in baths: Charchel: Gsell (1952) 43–87, commented by Lepelley (1994) 10–11; Constantinople, statue of Apollo and Aphrodite in Zeuxippos Baths: Bassett (2004) 165. Implied in laws: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.20 (A.D. 415). For civic squares see nn. 62–63 above.

⁸⁹ On all these points see n. 79 above.

⁹⁰ Regional variation significance: Bayliss (2004) 4–7, 26–29, 109–12.

One only has to think of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Hadrian's construction of pagan temples in Jerusalem, or the riots between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria and Cyrene (which saw religious buildings burned), to set the early 5th c. assaults on sanctuaries into a longer history of communal conflict in this region. It is striking to note how Constantine's early destruction of selected temples in the Levant (a policy not repeated elsewhere) was focused on temples particularly offensive to Christians, such as the Temple of Venus of Aelia Capitolina, which had been built over the site of Golgotha. This had itself been built as part of a Roman colony, which had been intended to shock the Jews.⁹¹ Relations between religious/ethnic communities had often been strained. The final persecution of Christians by Maximinus Daia and the temple restorations of Julian (both confined to this area) probably fed off the same dynamics as both the early and late 4th c. actions against temples. Perhaps such traditions gave radical Christians, demanding the overthrow of temples, more supporters here than they had elsewhere. Yet, if coercion cannot explain the end of the temples in other regions, it is perhaps time to consider entirely different processes which might also have contributed to this religious transition.

DECLINE?

One of the most important contributions of archaeology has been to establish the longevity of rural sanctuaries in Gaul and Britain. These sites lasted about a century longer than their urban counterparts. Furthermore, there was an actual increase in occupation in the 4th and first half of the 5th centuries A.D., in Britain and Greece.⁹² It seems that such activity is the corollary of the closure of urban temples, as Lewis suggested for Britain over forty years ago. Literary sources reveal that at Athens and Aphrodisias, urban pagans were visiting rural sanctuaries in the mid 5th c., further from the reach of magistrates, perhaps

⁹¹ Constantine targeting temples offensive to Christians: Caseau (2004) 120–26 with references. On the temple over Golgotha, removed by Constantine (Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 3.25–43, Jer. *Ep.* 58), with discussion of identity of cult: Belayche (2001) 136–49.

⁹² Rural sanctuaries active into 5th c.: Britain: Horne (1981); Lewis (1966) 49–55, 144. Gaul: see comments of Goodman (this volume) 168–71. Greece: Caseau (2004) 34–36.

in the safety of rural estates or within sympathetic rural communities capable of resisting all but imperially-sponsored coercion. A suburban cult centre at Menouthis, visited by Alexandrians in the late 5th c., was hidden.⁹³ But was this also true of fully rural shrines, fifty to a hundred years earlier? Rural temple sites active in northern Gaul and Britain during late 4th c. and early 5th c. were certainly not hidden. Outside of Dorchester, a temple was built, sometime after A.D. 367, on a hilltop clearly visible from the city.⁹⁴ Similarly, the location of some 5th c. cult sites known on mountain tops in Italy and Greece did not provide secrecy, especially if devotees were planning to light lamps at night. Rather, the frequentation of such sites was rooted in earlier cultic practices, even if it represented a revival. We do know of some caves which were used as cult sites, as they were earlier. However, the recovery of 5th c. votive lamps from the outskirts of Corinth, over the top of two demolished temples, counterbalances this.⁹⁵ It is well to remember that the activities of Martin of Tours or Hypatius of Bithynia against shrines did not involve surveillance and surprise, so much as visits to publicly accessible sacred buildings and trees.⁹⁶ It seems (*contra* Goddard and Caseau) that pagan rural sites were not really seriously covert in the late 4th to mid-5th c., but rather just ‘out of the way’.⁹⁷

⁹³ Extra-mural shrines, near Athens: Marinus *Vita Procli* 33; near Aphrodisias: Zach. Myt. *V. Sev.* (PO 2: 39–41); near Alexandria (Menouthis, 12km from the city): Zach. Myt. *V. Sev.* (PO 2: 14–44).

⁹⁴ Maiden Castle, 4th c. temple with 6m by 6m cella and 3m wide engaged portico, dated by a coin hoard under the mosaic floor to after A.D. 367: Wheeler (1943) 72–78, 131–35. Lydney Park: the buildings may not now date to the reign of Julian as once thought, but coins there go into the early 5th c.: Lewis (1966) 89. Casey and Hoffman (1999). Pagan’s Hill, late 4th c. rebuild, surviving into 5th c.: Rahtz (1951) not seen; Rahtz and Harris (1958) not seen.

⁹⁵ Mountain top shrine in Italy, Temple of Jupiter, Grand Saint Bernard (Emilia and Liguria) with coins of A.D. 395–423: Goddard (1996) 298. Mountain top shrines in Greece, with votive lamps and coins of 4th–5th c. date, and occasionally later, and details of cave sites: Caseau (2004) 35–36. It is worth noting that the emperor Julian ascended Mt. Casius, nr Antioch, to sacrifice to Zeus: Amm. Marc. 22.14.4. Temples of Corinth with post-abandonment votives: Rothaus (2000) 48–49.

⁹⁶ Attacks on rural shrines in late 4th to mid 5th c.: Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 13–15; id. *Dial.* 3.8; *V. Hypatii* 30 not seen.

⁹⁷ Late pagan sanctuaries as hidden: Caseau (2004) 35–36 and (this volume) 129; Goddard (2006) 290–93, who interprets private cult buildings and a public temple on the forum of Cosa (a run-down city), as being “private and hidden”. Private in some cases yes, but not seriously hidden, like priest holes and cave sanctuaries.

Thus, pagans had not been hunted out of existence by the early 5th c., but had instead been socially marginalised. Whilst they were not allowed to assemble in public in most cities, their move to the countryside could have had other motives. It could be seen to resemble the tendency of contemporary Christians to go off on a refreshing rural retreat, away from the cut and thrust of urban living, to seek an environment where, in the company of their peers, they can constitute an ideal community, free from the pressures of wider society. Perhaps pagans did not so much hide away, in the late 4th and 5th c., as withdraw wounded from the political arena, to inward-looking distant cult centres. As such, the reoccupation of rural sites is easily interpreted not as a sign of vitality, but of a continuing decline in the fortunes of paganism. Paganism had lost its political leadership of, and prominence in, cities. Its control over urban religious topography had gone, with the disruption of its ceremonial routes and its socio-political privileges, which had been deeply embedded in the *polis*. But eventually, the revitalised rural sites also came to an end, around the middle of the 5th c., with little evidence of destruction, just as many had in the 3rd c. A.D. or earlier. St Paulinus of Nola gives us a possible model for Italy: here the suburban shrine of St Felix, established in the early 5th c, attracted animal sacrifices from local farmers who had previously frequented local shrines, suggesting gradual changes rather than rupture.⁹⁸

Perhaps we are missing a longer term perspective on the fate of temples, in which the enforced closure of urban shrines was only part of the story. Bagnall has highlighted the financial troubles of temples in Egypt, well before the Constantinian revolution. However, the eclipse of urban shrines can be charted more widely.⁹⁹ In many parts of the empire few urban temples had been built after the 2nd c. A.D. Many of those constructed in that century had been large imperial cult buildings: expressions of political loyalty, valued as such rather than as expressions of belief, even by emperors. A decline in urban temple construction is visible in Africa throughout the 3rd c., as demonstrated by Sears.¹⁰⁰ The building work seen in Asia Minor in the same period is also derisory when compared with the previous century. At Rome,

⁹⁸ Shrine of St Felix at Nola: Paul. *Carm.* 20; Trout (1995).

⁹⁹ Egypt, "temples in trouble": Bagnall (1993) 260–68; (2008) 33–35, Dijkstra (this volume) 401–402, with Carrié (1995) 324–25.

¹⁰⁰ Decline in temple construction, Africa: Sears (this volume) 231.

only a couple of temples were inaugurated in the 3rd c., compared to a glut in the century before.¹⁰¹ These patterns have been variously interpreted—sometimes as a decline in pagan belief: “a world waiting for Christianity” as parodied by Sauer. Sauer himself proposes that the change reflects wider changing patterns of public construction. Yet the decline in temple construction is far sharper than the overall drop in public building: Sears’ analysis of epigraphy clearly demonstrates this for Africa; it is also evident from the archaeology of Greece, Asia Minor and the Levant. There really does seem to be a clear decline in temple construction, although this does not have to imply an irrevocable decline in paganism itself.¹⁰²

Perhaps most telling are the building priorities of the Tetrarchs. Here we had emperors who were keen to be represented as Jovius and Hercules respectively, but who did not build temples in cities, only on their private estates, where they were of modest size.¹⁰³ They continued the building priorities of the Severan emperors in the construction of imperial *thermae* in their capital cities, but not of temples.¹⁰⁴ A neglect of temple-construction under the tetrarchs can also be seen in Africa, where the intensity of construction and repair continued to diminish relative to work on other public buildings, a decline which

¹⁰¹ Asia Minor, 3rd c.: construction work limited to Temple of Dionysius at Miletus and repair of *cella* of Artemision of Ephesus: see Talloen and Vercauteren (this volume) 348. Rome, 3rd c.: some restoration, but only 2 new temples under Severus Alexander, 1 under Aurelian, and only 1 in the 4th c.: Richardson (1992) 456.

¹⁰² Decline in temple construction and epigraphic habit: Sauer (2003) 114–30; Sears (this volume) 231–37. Note that this decline is also reflected in the abandonment of some temple sites in the 3rd c.: for Africa, see Sears (this volume) 237; Egypt: Bagnall (1993) 260–68, plus comments echoing Sears in Bagnall (2008) 35 n. 37. My wider comments on Greece, Asia Minor and the Levant are based on an unpublished catalogue of civic building work which I am assembling. My remarks here are similar to those on Egypt of Bagnall (2008) 33–35, although written before reading his text.

¹⁰³ Jovius and Hercules: see Lavan (this volume) 457–59. Temples in cities: Diocletian built a temple in the suburb of Daphne, a subterranean shrine of Hecate, along with temples inside new stadium: Malalas 12.38. But it is wise to note that Malalas records that this work occurred alongside a new imperial palace here. Temples in imperial retreats: *Split*: Mayer (2002) 75–79; McNally (1990) 33, 46, 61; Mannell (1995); Kähler (1970) 41; Wrede (1981) 67ff. *Romuliana*: Mayer (2002) above 80–82; Vasić (1993) 142 ff; Srejić and Vasić (1994). Given that Julian’s mausoleum included a temple (Greg. Naz. *Or.* 5.18.) these imperial shrines may have been intended to be associated primarily with the tombs found inside the same complexes.

¹⁰⁴ Imperial *thermae* in capitals: *Antioch*: Malalas 12.38, *Nicomedia*: Lib. *Or.* 61.16–18, *Milan*: Haug (2003) 424–25; *Rome*: Steinby (1999) 53–58.

had begun earlier in the 3rd c.¹⁰⁵ Despite an earnest religious policy, aimed at reversing the spread of Christianity, the Tetrarchs do not seem to have placed much value on expressing their attachment to the old gods through temple building.¹⁰⁶ The absence of new temples from the building campaigns of 4th c. pagan emperors, even from those of Julian, is noteworthy. Julian, like the Tetrarchs and Maxentius, restored temples, but (based on our knowledge of specific cases rather than generic comments) did not build anew, even at Constantinople and Antioch, except within his palaces.¹⁰⁷ This was not simply because Julian's reign was short. Instead, his restoration work focused on the conflict-riven Near East, rather than being evenly spread.¹⁰⁸ Elsewhere, constructions *ex novo*, initiated or completed during the reign of Julian, include his harbour at Constantinople, the *tetrastoon* at Aphrodisias and his tomb at Tarsus.¹⁰⁹ Overall, it seems that classical urbanism had reached a point where cities which had once been dominated by temples (in Archaic or Etruscan times), had first ceded pride of place to political buildings (in Classical, Hellenistic and Early Imperial times), and now to palaces, entertainment buildings and baths (for the Mid to Late Empire). These priorities are clear from Lactantius' descriptions of Diocletian's building work at Nicomedia, and in the limited promi-

¹⁰⁵ Decline of temple building in Africa: Sears (this volume) 232 shows that the Tetrarchs did not restore more temples than earlier as a percentage of their building work—but continued an overall decline.

¹⁰⁶ Tetrarchic religious policy: Rees (2004) 57–71.

¹⁰⁷ Julian restoring temples: *General*: see Mulryan (this volume) 42–43 with bibliography; n.b. *Lib. Or.* 18.126–27, claims Julian did build temples but only mentions one, inside the palace. *Agai, near Tarsus*: Zonor. 13.13. *Emesa*: church converted into Temple of Dionysius: *Julian Mis.* 19; Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.7.5. *Anz, near Bostra*: *ILS* 9465 with Oikonomides (1987) 39. *Jerusalem*: attempted restoration of Jewish temple by Julian: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.22; Amm. Marc. 23.1; Drijvers (2004) 127–52; Brock (1977); Ephr. *Hymni contra Julianum* 4.18–23; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 5.3–4; Cyr. Hierosol. *Catech.* 15.15. Tetrarchic restorations, such as Diocletian on Temple of Apollo at Daphne: Malalas 12.38; Tetrarchic work in Africa: Sears (this volume) 231–33. Maxentius restoring temple of Venus and Rome: Steinby (1999) 121 with references. Palace shrines: Julian built temples inside the palace to Sol at Antioch and to Mithras at Constantinople: *Lib. Or.* 18.127; *Him. Or.* 41.1.

¹⁰⁸ Temple restorations under Julian included work in Arabia and Palestine, so was not simply confined to areas he visited. Thus it does seem to fit the regional pattern. The absence of a public temple at Constantinople is striking, as he sacrificed at the Tychaion in the city centre: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.8; Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.2.

¹⁰⁹ Major urban public building under Julian: harbour at Constantinople (Marcell. com. A.D. 508–509; Malalas 18.22); *tetrastoon* at Aphrodisias (*ALA* nos. 20 and 21 (A.D. 360–64); tomb at Tarsus: Johnson (2009) 103–104.



Fig.1 A small Late Roman temple uncovered by the University of Kent in 2009, in the Palaestra of Ostia. The structure was built as a fountain. It was converted into a temple by adding a porch with stairs, raising the floor, and inserting a cult statue base. The base and the new floor were decorated with thinly-cut reused marbles. (photo: Christian Krug 2010).

nence of temples in the imperial foundation of Philippopolis (built in A.D. 244).¹¹⁰

It is worth remarking that archaeologically-known *urban* temples of the 4th c. are very small indeed.¹¹¹ For example, excavation work at Ostia by the University of Kent in 2009–2010 uncovered a small temple which was revealed to be a late antique construction built over an early imperial fountain: this measured only 3.6 by 3.8 m in size (see fig. 1). At Argos, a temple built in spolia over a statue-group base in the centre of the agora measured only *ca.* 4.2 by 1.8 m. At Cyrene, the 4th c. shrine of Apollo the Cithara Player and the Temple of Zeus Ombrios

¹¹⁰ Diocletian's building at Nicomedia: Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 7. Philippopolis temple: Segal (1988) not seen.

¹¹¹ An exception seems to be Caerwent, where a temple built after *ca.* 330 had a cella of *ca.* 7 by 7.5m with a surrounding engaged portico. It is the same size as other Gallo-Roman temples, which were still being built in the countryside, and so should be related to them: Brewer (1990) 78 not seen; Lewis (1966) 164.

measured approximately *ca.* 5 by 5 m and 5 by 7m respectively.¹¹² Of temples known only from texts, the *nemeion* (a Hellenised labelling of a shrine of victory) and a temple of Olympian Zeus (i.e. 'Jovius') built by Diocletian in the stadium of Daphne at Antioch, are likely to have been simple structures, incorporated within the architectural fabric.¹¹³ The three 'temples' built by Constantine at Constantinople, seem to have been two *exedras* on the 'Basilica' courtyard (the *Tychaion* and *Rhea* temple), leaving only the 'capitolium'; this seems from reports of its statuary to have been a sanctuary for the Constantinian dynasty, although its dimensions are unknown. Neither do we know the size of the temple to the Constantinian dynasty at Hispellum. Judging from the size of *sacella* established for imperial statues in the period, it may have been as small as those noted above.¹¹⁴ Even Julian is thought to have turned one temple into a library—perhaps an admission that times had changed. New construction does not seem to have been a priority for him. His main contribution was, rather, to return altars to public buildings and re-open disaffected temples, recovering some from other uses.¹¹⁵

However, Julian's reclamation of disaffected temples was also perhaps not as important as one might think: in Antioch he seems only to have worked at Daphne (like Diocletian), on the sanctuary of Apollo, with whom he identified, as had Constantine earlier, as the sun god. Here resacralisation, after contamination by Christian burials, was his

¹¹² New temples at *Ostia*: see interim report by Gering and Lavan (submitted); *Argos*: Piéart and Touchais (1996) 84–85 (measurements taken by author from this plan). Piéart (1981) 906; *Cyrene*: Shrine of Apollo the Cithara Player (entirely made out of spolia) and Temple of Zeus Ombrios: Sears (this volume) 237, based on Ensoli Vittozzi (1992) 241 and Stucchi (1975) 443–44, with measurements taken very roughly from site plans provided by G. Sears.

¹¹³ *Antioch*, *nemeion* in the stadium of Daphne: Malalas 12.38.

¹¹⁴ *Constantinople*, the *Tychaion* and *Rhea* temples: Dagron (1974) 373–74; *Capitolium*: see Bauer (1996) 228–33 and <http://www.arkeo3d.com/byzantium1200/capitolium.html> (last accessed March 2011). Temple at Hispellum, A.D. 333/37: *CIL* 11.5265 = *ILS* 705, with Goddard (2002). Imperial *sacella*: see Lavan (this volume) 463–64.

¹¹⁵ Julian's library: see n. 64. Altars: See also Julian *Mis.* 24. Altars in mint: *Amm. Marc.* 22.11.9. Altar of Victory returned to Roman Senate probably by Julian, after removal under Constantius: Amb. *Ep.* 3.5, 17a (or 72a) (the memorandum of Symmachus), most recently translated and commented by Liebeschuetz (2005); Sheridan (1966) 187. On Julian's sacrifices at the *Tychaion* of Cpl see n. 108. Recovering temples (and their building materials) from other uses: e.g. Julian *Ep.* 80; (columns used in private property and imperial buildings); Lib. *Ep.* 1364 (temple turned into a house); Zonor. 13.13 (from a church).

focus, although he did repair the columns of the temple portico.¹¹⁶ Of the temples on the agorai of Antioch, already converted to secular uses, we hear nothing, despite the orations of Libanius, who worked on the main square and might have pleaded for their restoration.¹¹⁷ Julian was painfully reminded of religious change when he tried to attend a civic sacrifice at the Temple of Apollo in Antioch. Only a single goose was being offered by the priest, for a major festival, when Julian expected cattle from the city. Furthermore, the Antiochenes did not appreciate his own lavish blood sacrifices, which even alienated his pagan supporter Ammianus.¹¹⁸ Such reactions reflect changes which had been occurring in traditional religious practice, that were perhaps connected to the decline of temple building, though they do not necessarily directly equate with a decline in paganism overall. From the 3rd c. A.D., at the latest, blood sacrifices were falling out of favour, and emphasis was being placed on other aspects of religious life, such as incense burning, hymn singing and lamp lighting.¹¹⁹

If we set the decline in the popularity of sacrifice against the decline in the building of temples, by both emperors and city councils, there is something of a match. It seems possible that there was an underlying long-term decline of the importance of urban temples within paganism, which was connected to alienation from their principal rite. In this perspective, the disuse and even closure of temples could be seen as the final chapter in a longer story, which had little to do with Christianisation. Although it may seem a hackneyed idea, we need to consider again if ordinary pagans felt more interested in festivals of Dionysus and prayers said at home, than in temple sacrifice. Equally, others might have felt that official urban cults, so clearly connected to

¹¹⁶ Antioch (Daphne), building work on Temple of Apollo by Julian: Julian *Ep.* 80, see also *Cod. Iust.* 8.10.7. Moving of body of St. Babylas: Joh. Chry. *Or. in S. Babylas* and *De Babyla contra Julianum et gentiles*; Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.10; Julian *Mis.* 24. Julian and Constantine as the sun god: see Lavan (this volume) 458–59.

¹¹⁷ Antioch, temples on the agorai: Malalas 13.3–4 though see problems with this passage in Downey (1961) 621–31.

¹¹⁸ Julian's goose: Julian *Mis.* 25–26. Pagan opposition to sacrifices: e.g. Amm. Marc. 22.12.6, 25.4.3. Julian disapproves of Maiumas festival: Julian *Mis.* 26; Lib. *Or.* 41.16–17. Festival cortege mocking Julian: see Soler (2006) 62–64, with Lib. *Or.* 16.35.

¹¹⁹ Blood sacrifices falling out of favour and other religious devotions increasing: see Bradbury (1995), Goddard (2006) 296–97, and other studies on Demarsin (this volume) 31. On lamps, see Rothaus (2000) 49, 54–60; Caseau (this volume) 129–30; Sauer (this volume) 507, 539.

political power, did not offer a religious experience that could be found in theurgy, or the rites of Mithras. Ultimately, the best indications of the slow decline of urban temples may come from a few cities in the West, which seem to have escaped imperial censure. Here, despite imperially-directed closure, activity continued on a few sites beyond the late 4th c. From Britain, a temple in Verulamium saw its *temenos* rebuilt sometime after the accession of Theodosius, at Rome, festivals continued around the Temple of Flora, which had been restored around 400 [MMI], whilst at Ostia the Magna Mater *temenos* escaped redevelopment as a site for one of the new plazas nearby.¹²⁰ Here, as at most rural sanctuaries active at this date, there is little evidence of violent destruction.¹²¹ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that in some regions, above all in Italy, the end of the temples was a relatively untraumatic affair, as Mulryan argues in this volume.

If it seems premature to minimise ‘coercion’ and to promote ‘decline’, in examining the fate of the temples, it is worth considering the way scholarship has modified our view of the condition of Jews in Late Antiquity. Jews were discriminated against in the Roman empire, especially from the early 5th c., under pressure from Christian radicals. Restrictions were placed on building or improving Jewish synagogues, and a few were burned, albeit illegally. This discrimination was not as severe as that faced by pagans from the late 4th c., but it was once assumed that the lot of Jews was pretty poor in the 5th and 6th c., and that they were not able to assert themselves in public life.¹²² However, the archaeology of late synagogues, such as the splendid city centre synagogue of Sardis, has significantly nuanced such views. In several cities around the East Mediterranean, these buildings suggest a confident Jewish community, taking second place certainly, but not in decline.¹²³ Late antique place-inscriptions from Aphrodisias have also

¹²⁰ Late temple activity: Verulamium, rebuilding of *temenos* after deposition of coins of Theodosius: Wheeler and Wheeler (1936) 132–33. *Ostia*: Magna Mater temple: it is significant that the great *temenos* of the sanctuary was not converted into a public square despite two other plazas being built in the city during the 4th c., and despite a palaestra close to the temple being turned into a public square: see Gering and Lavan (submitted) and Gering (2004) 313–21. *Rome*: festivals continued around the Temple of Flora: see Mulryan (this volume).

¹²¹ End of rural sanctuaries, Britain: Lewis (1966) 51–55, 145; Gaul: Goodman (this volume) 167–72. On a rural temples active in Gaul in the 6th c.: 177.

¹²² Anti-Jewish legislation: Jones (1964) 948.

¹²³ Late antique synagogues: Levin (1987); Milson (2007). Sardis: see most recently Magness (2005). Inscriptions of Aphrodisias: see Chaniotis (2002).

shown that Jews had guaranteed places in the theatre and the odeon, as they did in the Hippodrome of Tyre.¹²⁴ Thus it is probably time to cease to believe that the textual tapestry of the end of paganism constructed by Fowden is relevant beyond the Near East, or that the anti-pagan laws of the Theodosian Code provide a simple basis for reconstructing religious history in the period. Rather, it is time to build a new picture from all available sources, which fully includes the new evidence available from archaeology.

CONTINUITY AND CO-EXISTENCE?

If the decline of urban temples can be seen as an internal development within paganism itself, rather than being caused by Christian coercion alone, then it is equally possible that rather more pagan belief and ritual survived into the 5th c., and that this has been overlooked. Within cities, one major area of pagan ritual life continued with little interruption—the traditional festival culture, which in the East at least shows signs of being dominated by Dionysian celebrations by the mid 4th c.¹²⁵ We do hear that festival corteges were banned from the streets around A.D. 400, and that they even earned the ire of the puritan Julian, for whom they represented the wrong kind of paganism. Whilst such processions seem to disappear in the early to mid 5th c., the festivals themselves continued, along with a number of other calendar favourites.¹²⁶ The May festival was a spectacular survival. Christianisation had effectively no impact on these celebrations, which were neither effectively challenged nor even cleaned up.¹²⁷ In the 6th c., eastern bishops still complained of nude swimming in the theatre as part of these celebrations, as they had earlier. The great popularity of late water basins installed in urban theatres and bouleuteria-odea

¹²⁴ Seats for 'Jews' and 'Old Jews' in the Theatre and Odeon, converted into a water-basin in the 6th c.: Roueché (1993) 117–18 (no. 47.2.b.row8 and 47.2.d.row6). Tyre: Rey-Coquais (2002) nos. 10, 12 and 14.

¹²⁵ Dionysiac celebrations in the East: Soler (2006) esp. 77–90.

¹²⁶ Festival corteges banned from the streets, early 5th c.: *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.41 (A.D. 407) and August. *Ep.* 91.8; disapproved by Julian *Mis.* 10, with Soler (2006) 32–33. Recorded at Ravenna, with images of the gods in A.D. 430–50 by Peter Chrysologus *Or.* 145bis, commented by Sotinel (2000) 265. Festival continuity: see Demarasin (this volume) 13, 32–35.

¹²⁷ Maiumas: Segal (1994) 11, with references, and Belayche (2004) 14–19.

in the East Mediterranean suggests that such activities were widespread: conversions are securely dated to the 5th–6th c. at Aizanoi and Aphrodisias.¹²⁸

Whilst temple cult within cities comes to an end around 400 nearly everywhere, evidence for continuing pagan devotional activity can be seen in a few places in the 5th c. So far, no site has been found that is as rich as Corinth. Here a number of former temple sites continued to attract votives, whilst the Fountain of the Lamps shows evidence of being sacred to both Christian and ‘pagans’, who left lamps here.¹²⁹ The use of *nymphaea* as sites for weddings at Constantinople and at Antioch suggests that such actions might have been tolerated inside cities elsewhere.¹³⁰ The Fountain of the Lamps site certainly does not suggest pervasive intolerance within the 5th c. city, but rather syncretic co-existence, at a level below which any public authority, even the Church, was prepared or able to enforce religious conformity. Indeed, the long lasting history of religious diversity in Late Antiquity suggests that such co-existence was more common than one might expect. Perhaps the final decline of this residual devotional activity has more to do with a gradual pervasive Christianisation of popular culture, in the 6th c. This transformation is documented by Peter Talloen in his study of iconography in material culture at Sagalassos: a process profound in its impact, but never entirely completed. Although the cult of rider saints or of St Michael might have attracted devotees of rider gods or of Ares, there were aspects of popular culture which were not Christianised but which persisted in everyday life, notably the talismans which protected houses, people and even the State, and straightforwardly syncretic figures such as Abrasax, or the Zodiac, which appear, respectively, on 6th c. mosaics from a church and a monastery.¹³¹

At least some traditional devotional practices must have persisted thanks to the tacit support of prominent lay Christians, and even some

¹²⁸ Water basin conversions at Aizanoi and Aphrodisias *bouleuteria*: interim reports in *AA* and Roueché (1993) no. 47.

¹²⁹ Corinth, continuing cult activity over demolished temples and at Fountain of the Lamps: Rothaus (2000) 32–63.

¹³⁰ *Nymphaea* for marriages, Cpl: Cedrenus vol. 1 p. 610.14f, Zonor. 14.1.18; Antioch, nymph statues thought to represent maidens for weddings: Malalas 10.19.

¹³¹ Talismans, as amulets protecting people: Sfameni (2010) with Dijkstra (forthcoming) on Christianised versions; protecting houses: see Mitchell (2006) with further reference to personal objects; protecting the State: see Lavan (this volume). Abrasax: Mitchell (2006) 297–304. Zodiac in mosaic of Mary in monastery, Scythopolis: Fitzgerald (1939).

clergy, in the same manner as Christians had earlier escaped persecution thanks to the passive tolerance of pagan magistrates. Caesarius of Arles cannot have been the only bishop faced with such attitudes from his own congregation.¹³² Regardless of what the bishop could tolerate within his own cathedral, and the public spaces of the city, what was out of sight may have been out of reach. This was not the 16th c., with hidden chapels and priest holes, public executions of heretics, or large-scale warfare between denominations, even if there were localised episodes of conflict, some of them bloody. Until the mid 5th c., and sometimes later, rural sanctuaries were not usually hidden, just located away from the city, on private estates, in much, if not all, of the empire.¹³³ These were surely places for bishops to keep an eye on, but the fact that some continued into the 6th c., suggests that no-one expected a band of Christian ruffians to arrive any time soon. It is perhaps at this level that we should understand the survival of significant pagan communities into the late 5th and late 6th c. in Caria and Sardinia: still present as a community, but with no public face.¹³⁴

On the other hand, it is possible that our vision of surviving 'pagans' in the 5th–6th c. is a little caricatured, and over-influenced by the conservative testimonies of Julian, Libanius, Eunapius and Zosimus, who saw a central role for traditional cults in political life, and who could be as polemical as their Christian counterparts. Whilst Christianity had its sacraments of initiation and promoted an exclusive identity, not all pagan cults required initiation, nor an essentialist recognition of being one thing and not another. Those 'pagans' most attached to traditional festive culture, and private devotion at springs or in the home, were surely not so unlike those Christians who retained an element of acceptable 'superstition' in their use of amulets, their attachment to magic and celebration of traditional festivals. Where there was not a successfully entrenched Christian priesthood, the boundaries between believers and non-believers may not have been so clear. Within the 5th c., a mixture of syncretism, indifference and co-existence was present, in the spaces between different religious identities, as reflected in

¹³² Escaping persecution: see n. 144. Caesarius *Serm.* 53.1–3, with Goodman (this volume) 168, 175.

¹³³ For a roadside temple in Gaul, burnt in the later 6th c.: see Baudonivia, *Vita Radegundis* 2.2.

¹³⁴ Pagans in Caria and Sardinia in late 5th and late 6th c.: Zac. *V. Sev.* p. 40; Greg. *Ep.* 9.204.

the house decor and dress ornaments of late antique people. In the major cities, life might be impossible for pagans prepared to show their faith, but out in the countryside it was somewhat easier. Here, perhaps ‘pagans’ and ‘Christians’ were often the same people, with a range of religious impulses, and different festivals to celebrate, although well-articulated Christianity did gradually push pagan tendencies to the margins.

RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

Admittedly, the issues raised above are still open questions. We have only recently started to appreciate the reactivation of rural shrines, and the extent of syncretic magic in everyday life, and there is still much work to do on popular religious practices which crossed the divide between religious communities. However, it does now seem reasonable to ask how severe was the repression of pagans by Christians in relation to other religious groups in other historical periods, and how severe was this repression in relation to conflicts between other religious groups within Late Antiquity itself. Certainly, the measures taken against pagans in the 4th–5th c. were not what we would call tolerant—a concept absent from the minds of Christian and pagans alike at this time.¹³⁵ Whilst many temples were preserved as works of art and festivals allowed to continue, the laws progressively prevented cult activity associated with the old gods. This was not enforced with much rigour by the imperial authorities, although major cults were disrupted with the help or tacit support of the state. Suburban churches might be permitted for heretical Christians, and intra-urban synagogues for Jews and Samaritans, but similar privileges were not granted for pagans, an attitude very similar to the policy of early Islam.¹³⁶

Yet, until the late 5th c., pagans felt able to participate in public life and have their beliefs widely known without fear of confiscation of property. Unorthodox syncretic devotions, addressed to angels, were permitted in the centre of Corinth and elsewhere, whilst rural shrines

¹³⁵ Tolerance and Late Antiquity: see Demarasin (this volume) 21–23 and especially Gaddis (2005).

¹³⁶ Urban churches permitted for heretical Christians: Gwynn (2010) 152–60 and Ward-Perkins (2010). Synagogues for Jews and Samaritans: Levine (1987); Milson (2007).

acted as new foci for sacrifice and other rituals. Here, a blind eye might be turned by Christians who maintained contact with those who did not wish to join in ecclesiastical rites, or who wished to keep their options open.¹³⁷ Some radical bishops did make life uncomfortable for these people, especially in Egypt and the Near East, but apparently not impossible. Religion was an important aspect of society, but not the only one—there were shared values of *padeia*, civic and imperial pride, and there was a need to get along in everyday social and economic transactions. Until the time of Justinian, pagans could be prominent for their learning, or for their wealth, if not in holding political power.¹³⁸ In the 6th c. A.D., as society became more thoroughly Christianised, such exceptions generally died out, and society became more comprehensively anti-pagan. Thus, in the 4th–5th c. A.D. there seems to have been a range of possible Christian reactions to paganism. Few were prepared to accept sacrifice, especially not on behalf of the State, but others tolerated co-existence in practice, and some opposed violent attacks. Many outside of the clergy were prepared to participate in a shared festival culture and retain apotropaic practices which owed nothing to Christianity.

As Lepelley has pointed out, Constantius II's interdiction of paganism claimed no victims for the capital punishment it prescribed, except in connection with magical intrigue.¹³⁹ Away from the machinations of court, the same seems to have been true of later legislation, until the late 6th c. Furthermore, the period only saw one attempt to execute heretics, which was widely deplored by senior clergy.¹⁴⁰ Even radical Egyptian monks do not seem to have believed in killing non-believers for the sake of it, but rather attacked those who opposed them, in the mob-violence of the political culture they were used to. Furthermore, such thugs were not representative of monks as a whole, some of whom disapproved of violence against temples.¹⁴¹ However, the radical bishops' ambition to rid society of all trace of polytheism was

¹³⁷ Devotions to angels: see Saradi (this volume) 289–90. Christians protecting rural shrines: on Caesarius of Arles see Goodman (this volume) 168, 179, with references.

¹³⁸ Religion in relation to other spheres of life: see essays in Gwynn and Bangert (2010) and Rebillard and Sotinel (2010).

¹³⁹ Sacrifice on pain of death: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.4 (A.D. 356). Lack of executions: Lepelley (1994) 7.

¹⁴⁰ Reaction to execution of Priscillianists by Magnus Maximus, (technically on charges of magic, though widely perceived as being for heresy): Sanchez (2009).

¹⁴¹ Monks disapproving of violence against temples: see n. 14.

‘intolerant’, and Cyril of Alexandria does resemble a 16th c. zealot in this regard. He permitted violence that supported his cause, in a city which was a cockpit of conflict, and which might have benefitted from a different approach. Nevertheless, an analysis of the entirety of late antique society reveals a much more pluralistic culture than legal texts or hagiographic polemics suggest. Within this culture, temple ‘paganism’ was on a slow decline, at the same time as its festival culture and some of its popular devotions were being absorbed, accepted or tolerated by Christianity.

The Neoplatonic philosophers who emigrated to Persia to escape Justinian famously never found the better conditions they were looking for.¹⁴² Thus, a sense of perspective is needed. It is perhaps instructive to compare the incidence of coercive acts against pagans with those against others in the same period. One might consider pressure on the Jews (rather than Samaritans) in Late Antiquity. This was certainly discriminatory, but was confined mainly to illegal mob violence, in which the burning of synagogues might be occasionally tolerated, but did not prevent others from flourishing. Then there was conflict between Christians—featuring the closure of churches, the banning of processions, and the exiling of leaders, often sponsored and carried out by the State, with murderous clashes occurring in Africa, at Rome and at Alexandria, between different factions. To Ammianus, in the late 4th c., the worst aspect of Christian behaviour was not how Christians treated pagans, but how they treated one another, and this did not really improve later in the period.¹⁴³ However, the most severe reported conflicts between Christians—such as on the election of Pope Damasus in A.D. 366, which left 137 dead in one Roman church (Amm. Marc. 27.3)—pale into insignificance when compared to political violence in the same period: an unintended scuffle between heaving crowds and imperial guards in A.D. 350 at Constantinople resulted in 3,150 civilians being killed (Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 2.16); the massacre instigated by Theodosius I at the hippodrome of Thessalonica left 7,000 dead (Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.17), whilst the Nika riot of A.D. 532 left 30,000 dead in the eastern capital (Procop. *Vand.* 1.24.54–56). This sort of politically-directed mass-murder did feature in the religious conflicts of the Reformation, but apparently not in

¹⁴² Philosophers in Persia: Agath. 2.23–31.

¹⁴³ Christians vs Christians: Amm. Marc. 22.5.4.

Late Antiquity, which is a period with its own dynamics that deserves not to be kept within the long shadow of later times.

MYTHOLOGIES OLD AND NEW?

If it is becoming possible to write the history of ‘paganism’ in Late Antiquity as more of an internal evolution rather than as a violent extinction, how should we now view such events as the sack of the Serapeum or the death of Hypatia within ancient writing and modern scholarship? Only the former can withstand scrutiny as a triumphal act, motivated by Christian intolerance. Yet, by the time of John of Nikiu, the death of Hypatia had also become charged with religious significance, so that future generations perceived both events as significant moments, even prime examples of the religious transition of the period. How did these acts become so important in historical narratives, ancient and modern? The answer would seem to lie in the construction of religious polemic by both ‘pagans’ and Christians, and by enlightenment secularists since Voltaire. Both episodes are highly dramatic, and lend themselves to narratives looking for vivid demonstrations of either Christian victory or Christian intolerance, being set in the heart of a major city and featuring well-known personalities, who were famous for other things. Yet these events were not the most violent religious conflicts of Late Antiquity, none of which really compare to those closer to our own times. But both events fit well within literature designed to underpin a particular set of values, for which the audience is composed of those already committed to the cause. As such, they obscure the real nature of change, which was slower, and the significance of urban temple closure, which was a final though decisive blow to institutions which no longer enjoyed the support of all of the ‘pagan’ community.

Here we need to take a step back, and consider the nature of religious and even political myth-making, in which melodrama plays a substantial role, as it does in most origin myths, from the Great Persecution to the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Whilst Christian martyr stories in the Great Persecution contributed to this, it can be more seen widely. One only has to think of the place of the liberation of the Bastille in contemporary France to recognise this: it actually involved the accidental liberation of ordinary criminals, as no political prisoners were there at the time. In this conflict, far more deadly events took place

elsewhere, but the episode was taken as exemplary of a wider struggle. Whilst it is urgent and necessary to study the roots of religious conflict and violence, it is perhaps now time to unburden ourselves of the polemical legacy of both late antique Christians, and enlightenment secularists, and to look at the period entirely afresh, focusing especially on archaeological evidence. This would be to abandon definitively our tendency to wish to illustrate textual history with archaeological case studies, and to stand back and focus new work on the alternative testimonies which archaeology can offer. In particular, it is important to note that the balance of evidence used by Deichmann, Fowden, and more recently Trombley and Sauer, whilst persuasive, might not be the right one. Coercion did contribute to the eclipse of the temples, but there were other factors, which may have been equally, or more, significant. This present volume suggests that the end of the temples was slower than once thought, and that ‘paganism’ survived longer, although, as it lost its public role, it gradually faded into the ‘bad habits’ of an increasingly Christian people.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ALA = C. Roueché ed. *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989).
 CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum Series Latinae*.
 CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*.
 CSCO.SS = *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri*.
 GCS = *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*.
 PG = *Patrologia Graeca*.
 PPO = *Præfectus praetorio Orientis*.
 TAQ = *Terminus ante quem*.
 TPQ = *Terminus post quem*.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 A small Late Roman temple uncovered by the University of Kent in 2009 in the Palaestra of Ostia. The structure was built as a fountain. It was converted into a temple by adding a porch with stairs, raising the floor, and inserting a cult statue base. The base and the new floor were decorated with thinly-cut reused marbles (photo: Christian Krug 2010).

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAYS

'PAGANISM' IN LATE ANTIQUITY: THEMATIC STUDIES

Koen Demarsin

INTRODUCTION

The 'pagan' cults of Late Antiquity vary greatly in their characteristics. As a consequence it is almost impossible to assemble them under one single category. In this small overview, we encounter both regional cults of the Mediterranean, the Greco-Roman 'official' cults, mystery cults, the imperial cult, neo-Platonic philosophy, which influenced the religious behaviour of non-Christians and Christians alike, and finally tendencies towards henotheism and monotheism. This variety amply demonstrates why it is so difficult to place them under one banner.

Different suggestions have been made about how precisely people who were neither Christian nor Jewish should be defined. Terms such as 'non-Christians', 'pagans', 'Hellenes' or 'polytheists' all served to explain their common characteristics, and to tie together the mass of non-Christian practitioners. All have produced their own objections: 'pagan' might be too polemic, and 'Hellene' ignores those beyond the Mediterranean basin. We could also question whether all non-Christians in Late Antiquity were indeed polytheists? Or, perhaps, we should not artificially group them into one single category at all, and preserve their individuality? A discussion of nomenclature is, however, not the aim of this essay, which aims to review research on non-Christian and non-Jewish cults during Late Antiquity, both for students and for researchers who are not familiar with the late antique non-Christian religions, in order to provide easy access to the literature and the sources.

It was during the reign of Constantine that the way these cults would develop during Late Antiquity was set out; therefore we will take his accession to the imperial throne as a starting point for the present essay. However, major social and religious changes cannot be seen as being provoked by single decisions alone. Many occurred as a response to more profound social changes. Therefore Constantine's accession is by no means a fixed beginning, and consequently the evolution of the cults will be considered before that point if necessary.

SOURCES AND REFERENCE WORKS

Reference Works and Bibliographical Aids

Reference works with a special focus on the late antique ‘pagan’ cults are scarce. These religions seldom constitute the focus of any research on their own, but are often incorporated within volumes studying religions in general, or are studied within the context of Late Antiquity or Byzantium. Discussion of these cults also appears in reference works dedicated to Christianity, implying their relevance for the emergence and formation of the Christian faith.

Late Antiquity: Bowersock G. W., Brown P. and Grabar O. (1999) edd. *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1999); Kazhdan A. P. *et al.* (1991) edd. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York and Oxford 1991); Mitchell S. (2007) *A History of the Later Roman Empire A.D. 284–641. The Transformation of the Ancient World* (Blackwell History of the Ancient World) (Malden, Mass. and Oxford 2007); Reece R. (1999) *The Later Roman Empire: An Archaeology A.D. 150–600* (Tempus 1999); *Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. (Weimar 1990–2006); *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Weimar 1996–2003).

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*Sources and Source Collections*1. *Sourcebooks*

The increased interest in Late Antiquity and late antique religions during the last few decades has made easy access to the relevant sources a necessity. Different sourcebooks have been published, each with their own scope; however, due to the emphasis on written sources, the archaeological sources often remain largely unexplored.

General Works: Beard M., North J. and Price S. (1998) *Religions of Rome. Vol. 2, A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne 1998); Ferguson J. (1980) *Greek and Roman Religion: A Sourcebook* (New Jersey 1980).

Late Antique Religion: Klauck H.-J. (2003) *The Religious Context of Early Christianity. A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Minneapolis 2003); Lee A. D. (2000) *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity. A Sourcebook*. (London and New York 2000); Lieu S. N. C. and Montserrat D. (1996) *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views. A Source History* (London and New York 1996); Maas M. (2000) *Readings in Late Antiquity. A Sourcebook* (London and New York 2000); MacMullen R. and Lane E. N. (1992) edd. *Paganism and Christianity, 100–425 C.E.: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis 1992); Valantasis R. (2000) ed. *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice* (Princeton and Oxford 2000).

2. Sources

For a more thorough study of ancient literary sources, we now have the *Clavis Scriptorum Graecorum et Latinorum*, a major instrument in the search for authors writing in Greek or Latin. It contains a thorough biography and bibliographical analysis of each writer. More compact and less extensive is the volume of Berger and Billen (1991). For the study of late antique religion and the relationship between Christians and non-Christians, the recent publications of Fiedrowicz (2004) and Neuser and Avery-Peck (2007) are of particular interest and for the sources from the Byzantine empire, Karayannopoulos and Weiss (1982) can be consulted.

Reference Works: *Greek and Roman Authors:* Berger J. D. and Billen J. (1991) *Dictionnaire des auteurs grecs et latins de l'antiquité et du moyen age. (s.l. 1991)*; LaRue R. Vincent G. and St-Onge B. (1985) *Clavis Scriptorum Graecorum et Latinorum*. (Trois Rivières 1985). *Late Antique Authors:* Fiedrowicz M. (2004) *Christen und Heiden. Quellentexte zu ihrer Auseinandersetzung in der Antike* (Darmstadt 2004); Neuser J. and Avery-Peck A. J. (2007) *Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity. Pagan, Judaic, Christian*. (Leiden, Boston and New York 2007). Karayannopoulos J. and Weiss G. (1982) *Quellenkunde zur Geschichte von Byzanz (324–1453)* (Wiesbaden 1982).

'PAGAN' CULTS: HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Study of Late Antique Paganism

1. *The Evolution of Research*

During the end of the 19th c. and the first half of the 20th c., some major works were published on the growth of early Christianity which formed the basis for later research on the subject (cfr. Harnack,

De Rossi, etc.). The study of patristic sources, which tend to be polemical in character, was especially developed at this time. As a consequence, the idea of a Christian struggle against a radically different 'paganism' permeates works of this period. It is especially present in discussions of pagan cults in the Late Roman period, such as Schultze's *Geschichte des Untergangs des Griechisch-Römischen Heidentums* (1887) or Geffckens *Ausgang des Griechisch-Römischen Heidentums* (1929). An attempt to explain the victory of Christianity over paganism as logical and inevitable, because of its superiority over the older cults, we see in De Labriolle (1934), as he states in his introduction:

Ils se trompèrent aussi, ou plutôt ils décelèrent, soit leur insuffisante clairvoyance, soit l'aveuglement de leur parti pris, en essayant à peine de comprendre l'esprit du christianisme, son âme secrète, le mystère de son emprise morale et religieuse. Ils se regardent de dehors,.... Ils ignorent sa vie inutile, sa sève spirituelle, les puissantes attaches qu'il nouait dans les sensibilités. L'empereur Julien est le seul à avoir eu quelques intuitions de ce genre, parce qu'il n'avait pu désapprendre les leçons reçues dans sa jeunesse, et rêvait... (p. 11).

In these works, paganism was studied, not in and of itself, but in order to understand how the imperially favoured Christian faith was able to dominate hearts and minds at the expense of the old religions, which were seen as doomed to perish. Later, however, the study of paganism tried not only to understand the success of the Christian faith, but also to understand the roots of early Christianity, and the late antique religious atmosphere as a whole.

Pioneering Works: De Labriolle P. (1934) *La réaction païenne. Étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du I^{er} au IV^e siècle* (Paris 1934); Geffcken J. (1972) *Der Ausgang des griechisch-römischen Heidentums* (reprography from 1929) (Darmstadt 1972); Schultze V. (1985) *Geschichte des Untergangs des griechisch-römischen Heidentums I/II* (reprography of 1887) (Hildesheim, Zürich and New York 1985).

2. Recent Developments

More recent studies of the religious context of late antique Christianity have opened up other ways of thinking. The idea of a conflict between religions no longer seems satisfactory, and it has become clear that there was no such a thing as a single 'paganism' opposing Christianity. Consequently, current studies, influenced by recent archaeological discoveries, have nuanced the picture; there has been a movement away from a top-down history of religion towards an interest in day-to-day religiosity, how the different cults interacted with each other, and how

they were embedded in the late antique religious world. This has led to the paradigm that paganism cannot be seen as a single monolithic block in opposition to Christianity, as portrayed by both contemporary Christian and pagan writers.

Although small in number, several monographs on the non-Christian/Jewish cults in the Late Empire have been published, which describe the story, legal status, and characteristics of these cults and their position within a transforming Roman empire. A general view of the status and persistence of paganism can be found in Trombley (1993–94), which is a very useful source for the history of later paganism as a whole. As these volumes concentrate mainly on the literary sources, it is advisable to also consider regional surveys for further, more detailed, observations. Detailed descriptions of the interaction between Christians and non-Christians in the 'High Empire' are collated by Fox (1986), while the works of MacMullen also shed light on these incidents in later Antiquity. A more recent and concise overview is provided by Chuvin (2004). The shift of interest toward the pagan cults is apparent in the way 'paganism' begins to be treated: much less in terms of conflict with Christianity and not simply as an inferior belief system. The possibility of pagan tolerance of Christianity even begins to be expressed. Brown (1978), in his seminal work, tried to explain the religious atmosphere of the period, its characteristics and transformations, from the point of view of late antique practitioners. Further insights into the mind of late pagan worshippers have been presented by Bowersock (1990), by Fossum (1999), and by Fowden (1981, 1986). More general histories of late 'paganism' are provided by MacMullen (1981) who describes the functioning of pagan religious cults and their collective beliefs.

Paganism and Christianity: Béatrice P. F. (1997) "Hellénisme et christianisme aux premiers siècles de notre ère: parcours méthodologiques et bibliographiques", *Kernos* 10 (1997) 39–56; Brown P. (1978) *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1978); Burkert W. (1996) *Klassisches Altertum Und Antikes Christentum: Probleme Einer Übergreifende Religionswissenschaft* (Berlin 1996); Chuvin P. (2004) "Christianisation et résistance des cultes traditionnels. Approches actuelles et enjeux historiographiques", in *Hellénisme et christianisme. Mythes, imaginaires, religions*, edd. M. Narcy and É. Rebillard (Villeneuve d'Ascq 2004) 15–34; Fox R. (1986) *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century A.D. to the Conversion of Constantine*. (London and New York 1986); Hedrick C. W. (2000) *History and Silence. Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin, Texas 2000); MacMullen R. (1984) *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London 1984); MacMullen

R. (1997) *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, Connecticut and London 1997); Trombley F. (1993–94) *Hellenistic Religion and Christianization C. 370–529*. (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 115/1–2) (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1993–94).

Pagan Thought: Bowersock G. (1990) *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge and New York 1990); Fossum J. (1999) “The myth of eternal rebirth: critical notes on G. W. Bowersock. *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*”, *VigChr* 53 (1999) 305–15; Fowden G. (1981) “Late antique paganism reasoned and revealed”, *JRS* (1981) 178–82; Fowden G. (1986) *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton 1986); MacMullen R. (1981) *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London 1981).

The Legal Status of Late Antique Paganism and its Revival under Julian

The triumph of Christianity was by no means inevitable, and it would be wrong to think that from the accession of Constantine imperial policy was set once and for all in favour of his favoured religion. The imperial policy toward non-Christians/Jews during the 4th, but also during the 5th c., depended heavily on the emperor. Rather than having a coherent anti-pagan policy, the emperors reacted rather *ad hoc* to situations as they arose. A comprehensive survey of the (legal) history of ‘official’ paganism is provided by Jones (1986), and more specifically by Chuvin (1990) and Fowden (1998). A recent work on Late Roman imperial policy is written by Errington (2006). For attitudes to the polytheistic cults in the 5th c. see Noethlichs (1998), and for their demise O’Donnell (1979) and Smith (1976) are useful.

Legislative sources give ample proof of the longevity of the (former) official and regional cults, but also of practices such as magic and sorcery. The ancient Roman cults were not suddenly abolished, but seem to have been sanctioned step by step, until their functioning became impossible due to the fact that all the features necessary for them to operate were either banned or abolished. However, if we look at the raft of anti-pagan legislation, another tendency emerges. The gradual increase in anti-pagan laws and the repetition of different edicts attest to the longevity of the cults, but also to the difficulty of the government to keep them under control and to stop their practice. Sometimes these cults functioned well into the 6th c. General remarks on the late antique religious laws have been made by Mommsen, Rougé and Delmaire (2005), while Noethlichs (1971) and the important contribution of Gaudemet (1990) focus upon the anti-pagan legislation. Legislative evidence for the Christianisation of the empire is collected and studied by Hunt (1993) and Salzman (1993).

A decisive turning point for both the evolution of the Christian faith and of the destiny of 'pagan' cults, is marked by Constantine's reign. Constantine's own position toward the gods and their worshippers remained pragmatic, in spite of his favouritism of Christianity. His attitude toward the non-Christian/Jewish cults is discussed in Clauss (2006), who gives a short introduction to the topic, by Curran (1996), discussing the problem from a legislative perspective, by Girardet (2006) and by Lee (2006). Constantine's position toward sacrifice remains unclear and is widely discussed, good examples being Barnes (1984) and Bradbury (1994) who emphasise his rejection of blood sacrifices. The attitude of Constantius II remains rather less known: he seems to have done comparatively little to favour Christianity over 'paganism', whilst Constans was equally ambivalent.

During his short reign, Julian (A.D. 361–63) attempted to reverse growing Christian prominence in public life by actively promoting the pagan cults. As a result of the increasing influence of Christianity on social and political activity, Julian tried to construct a pagan 'Church' along Christian lines in order to challenge its growth. Because of his premature death we cannot say whether he would have succeeded in his aim, but the problems he had trying to unite the various cultic groups, suggests he is unlikely to have. In his recently published book, Tougher (2007) provides a brief introduction to Julian's life and his importance. For more detailed information on the religious actions and philosophical ideas of Julian there is Bouffartigue (2004), Fowden (1998), Rosen (1997 and 2006) and Smith (1995). Julian's attempt to establish pagan churches is studied by Koch (1927 and 1928) and more recently by Nicholson (1994). For his legislative activities, see Sargenti (1986). A history of Julian, his actions and how he has been mythologised has been written by Braun and Richter (1978).

Valentinian abstained from interfering in religious matters. Valens however, was another controversial emperor. Wiebe (1995) believes that his actions against pagans was religiously inspired, while Lenski (2002) admits that while he may have been ruthless, his aim was not to destroy the pagan cults altogether. A reconstruction of city life under Valentinian, including its religious dimension, is made by Lizzi Testa (2004). The reigns of both Valens and Valentinian are discussed by Den Boeft *et al.* (2007).

During the 4th c. the official state cults gradually lost their grip on politics and society. Gratian refused to take up the role of *pontifex maximus*, which meant the state cults became separated from the formal government apparatus and that their correct observance was

no longer officially connected to the prosperity of the state. Polytheist cults did not disappear, however. Theodosius I initially paid little attention to them, having other problems to deal with, such as Arianism. It was only towards the end of his reign, around A.D. 391–92, that he prohibited sacrifice, striking a decisive blow against pagan practice. His praetorian prefect Cynegius Maternus stands out for his oppressive policies against pagans and Christian heretics, especially in the East (Matthews (1967)).

The religious policies of emperors are reflected in the series of imperial pronouncements collated by the emperors Theodosius II and Justinian. The fact that several of Justinian's edicts against 'paganism' had to be frequently repeated shows the persistence of these cults in the 6th c., despite earlier official restrictions. A guide to the age of Justinian is provided by Maas (2005), while his religious politics is studied in greater detail by Constantelos (1964) and Irmscher (1988 and 1990).

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Individual Cults

1. *The Imperial Cult*

The importance and success of the imperial cult can be explained by the fact that it provided a medium through which the nobility could gain access to prestigious priesthoods, and the Roman state could unify the culturally and religiously disparate peoples within its territory. It was this cohesive ability that ensured the longevity of the cult under the Christian emperors, albeit in a modified form. During the 4th and the 5th centuries the imperial cult still had a great deal of prestige attached to it. In order to be made divine, the emperor needed to combine a reign which kept the governing classes happy with tangible economic or military accomplishments; such an honour was not granted automatically, as pointed out by Van Nuffelen (2002). Clauss (1999) illustrates the obligations expected from Christians towards the emperor and how this continued into the Byzantine period, while Potter (1994) emphasises the sacred authority that was connected with the position of emperor and how it evolved.

The growing importance of charismatic religious leaders meant that the emperor no longer had a monopoly on spiritual leadership. He now had to compete with bishops or holy men and share power with them, as argued by Barcelo (2003). In order to remain relevant, the imperial cult had to adapt to the new Christian world. Sacrifice was eliminated, whilst festive games and the celebration of the emperor's divine image were emphasised. Another difference from the earlier emperor cult was the introduction of the possibility of imperial sainthood, comparable to the cult of saints (Bowersock (2000) 51–55). On the acceptance of this cult by Christians, see Aufarth (2003). How the imperial cult influenced the Church is examined in Brent (1999).

The cult and its associated ceremonies evolved toward a Christian or more secularised form at the imperial court of Constantinople. Deprived of their pagan content, these ceremonies no longer had any stigma attached to them, with only a remnant of the earlier festivals remaining. Some aspects of ancient court ceremonial were also preserved in this new context. The forms of obedience and the importance of the emperor's image were formal elements necessary for the functioning of the cult. Gothic dances, originally 'pagan' in character, took place in the palace of Constantinople from the 5th to the 9th c. and the *brumalia*, associated with the cult of Dionysus, until the 10th c. For this festival clerics also took part, without, it seems, being aware that they were attending a festival once connected to Dionysus (Bolognesi 1995) See also MacCormack (1981) and Nelson (1976) for the evolution of imperial and other ruler ceremonies.

A similar picture emerges from the province of Africa, where the imperial cult persisted for a long time, but seemingly only as secular ceremonies to honour the emperor. Such ceremonies survived at a local and provincial level during the 5th and 6th centuries, as is illustrated by local epigraphy (Duval (1974)).

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2. *The Mystery Cults*

The so-called 'mystery cults' were a series of secretive religious sects, usually from the East, that claimed to be carriers of a special wisdom that their adherents would have revealed to them through a series of rites and teachings, of which we know little. By Late Antiquity they had reached the peak of their popularity, only falling away in the face of an imperially sanctioned Christianity, itself regarded as a mystery cult by many. Benoit (1975) discusses the mysteries in relation to Christian belief and Van Heever (2006) discusses them in relation to the Christianisation of the empire.

The transition of a statue of Cybele from Pessina to Rome in the 3rd c. B.C. marked a new chapter in the history of Roman religion; the goddess being the focus for the first 'mystery cult' in the city. The cult was the first to be brought within the traditional Roman religious sphere, but as with other mystery cults, the 4th c. A.D. was a decisive period. General remarks on Cybele can be found in the standard work by Vermaseren (1977), and the cult's relationship with Christianity is discussed by Fear (1996), with perhaps too much of an emphasis on rivalry. Borgeaud (1996) describes the similarities and the comparisons that have been made between the figures of Cybele and the Virgin Mary. For the evolution of the rite of the *taurobolium*, connected with the cult, see 'Sacrifice' (infra).

At the end of the 1st c. A.D., or soon after, Mithraism first appears in the archaeological record in Rome, and during the next two centuries it spread to the rest of the western empire, often in a military context. Because of the many common elements shared between it and Christianity (Sunday as a holy day, baptism, the concept of divine forgiveness of sins etc.) the relationship between the two has provoked a great deal of interest. One of the questions that continues to puzzle scholars is whether Mithraism ever formed a thread of the Christian faith. Clauss (2000) considers that the Mithraic cult was energetically

suppressed by Christians, who frequently constructed their churches over the places in which Mithraic ritual took place. Scholars such as Nicholson (1995), Sauer (1996), Merkelbach (1984) and Luther (1989) disagree with this view of a focused and active Christian suppression. According to these authors the cult was virtually forgotten during the 4th c. by Christians and non-Christians, and that what happened to Mithraism and mithraea was far more complex than simply Christian destruction. Within discussion of its survival, the reign of Julian takes a prominent place.

Beck (2007) has recently published a general work on the cult of Mithras in the Roman empire. Other recent discussions are to be found in Court (2001) and Clauss (2000), a translation of his *Mithras. Kult und Mysterien* (1990), a work that is excellent as a first introduction to the subject, and which also covers the later existence of the cult and its relationship to Christianity. On the end of Mithraism, the volume of Sauer (1996) deals with a lot of archaeological evidence. Comparative studies between Christianity and Mithraism are to be found in Deman (1975) on iconographical parallels and in Meslin (1978) on ritual similarities.

Like the cult of Mithras, the importance of the cults of Isis and Serapis diminished during the 4th c. The *Serapeion* in Alexandria was destroyed in A.D. 391, along with the sanctuaries of Isis and Serapis at Kanopos. The cult of Isis, however, survived much longer. The, albeit unreliable, Life of Severus reports the persistence of the Isis cult at Menouthis in Egypt around the late 4th to early 5th c. and the tolerated veneration of Isis in Nubia only came to an end under the rule of Justinian, when the Isis temple at Philae was converted into a church dedicated to St. Stephen. However, the Egyptian cults were not a special focus for Christian polemics (Tacács (1995)); the late 4th c. riots in Alexandria should, perhaps, be considered a regional issue.

In Rome, most sanctuaries dedicated to Isis and Serapis probably fell into material decline during the 4th c., while the *Iseum* on the *Campus Martius* probably remained in use until the beginning of the 5th c., after which the remains may have remained a focus for secular use or even for some cultic activity late in the same century. Its longevity was due to the continuing presence of a pagan elite in the city with all the privileges that still entailed. General discussion of these cults in the Graeco-Roman world is to be found in Tacács (1995). For remarks on their long *durée* and survival, see Dijkstra (2004) who looks at the Isis cult beyond the reign of Justinian, while Alföldi (1937) reports on

a festival to the goddess during the 4th c. For more detailed information on the cult in Rome, see Ensoli (2000) and for the Egyptian and Alexandrian situation, the regional bibliographic essay in this volume has a more detailed bibliography. Just like Cybele, comparisons were made between Isis and the Virgin Mary. For an overview, see Dunand (2000).

Sun worship, which constituted an important part of mystery cult practice, such as within Mithraism, became an important element of the emperor cult as well. As a provider of religious and political unity, *Sol Invictus* was a direct rival to Christianity. Possibly as a result of this, the common language of the Sol cult found its way into Christian rhetoric, and was used alongside the similar language of the state. Under Constantine, the cult of *Sol Invictus* reached unprecedented popularity, but after Constantine's acceptance of Christianity, the solar cult was overshadowed, losing imperial support at least. The creation of Sunday does not need to be seen as a syncretistic act by Constantine, but, according to Girardet (2007), it was, rather, an early step in the Christianisation of the empire. A general, older, work on *Sol Invictus* is Halsberghe (1972); the relations between the emperor cult and that of *Sol Invictus* and the position of Constantine are described by Berrens (2004) and, with more focus on Constantine's attitude to *Sol*, by Bergmann (2006). A very useful work on the interaction between *Sol* and Christ is Wallraff (2001). *Helios/Sol* also became syncretised with other pagan deities and heroes during Late Antiquity, such as Orpheus, Mithras, Apollo, Seth and Serapis, as described by Fauth (1995).

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Mithraism: Beck R. (2007) *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire. Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun* (Oxford 2007); Clauss M. (1990) *Mithras. Kult und Mysterien* (Munich 1990); Clauss M. (2000) *The Roman Cult of Mithras. The God and his Mysteries* (New York 2000); Court J. M. (2001) "Mithraism among the mysteries", in *Religious Diversity in the Graeco-Roman World: a Survey of Recent Scholarship*, edd. D. Cohn-Sherbok and J. M. Court (Sheffield 2001) 182–95. *The End of Mithraism*: Nicholson O. (1995) "The end of Mithraism", *Antiquity* 69 (1995) 358–62; Sauer E. (1996) *The End of Paganism in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire. The Example of the Mithras Cult*. (BAR-IS 634) (Oxford 1996); Turcan R. (1983) "Les motivations de l'intolérance chrétienne et la fin du mithraïsme au IV^e siècle ap. J.C.", *Actes du VII congrès de la Fédération internationale des associations d'études classiques II Budapest* (Budapest 1983) 209–26. *Mithras and Christ*: Deman A. (1975) "Mithras and Christ: some iconographical similarities", in *Mithraic Studies. Proceeding of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies* 2, ed. J. R. Hinnells (Manchester 1975) 507–17; Luther M. H. (1989) "Roman Mithraism and Christianity", *Numen* 36 (1989) 2–15; Meslin M. (1978) "Convivialité ou communion sacramentelle? Repas mithraïque et eucharistie chrétienne", in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme. Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique. Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris 1978) 295–305; Schütze A. (1972) *Mithras. Mysterien und Urchristentum*. (Stuttgart 1978).

Isis and Sarapis: Alföldi A. (1937) *A Festival of Isis under the Christian Emperors of the IVth Century* (Dissertationes Pannonicae II.7) (Budapest 1937); Dijkstra J. H. F. (2004) "A cult of Isis after Justinian?", *ΣPE* 146 (2004) 137–54; Dunand F. (1973) *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée* (Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain 26) (Leiden 1973); Ensoli S. (2000) "I santuari di Iside e Sarapide a Roma e la resistenza pagana in età tardoantica", in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 267–87; Merkelbach R. (1995) *Isis Regina-Zeus Sarapis. Die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1995); Tacács S. A. (1995) *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World* (Religions in the Graeco Roman World 124) (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1995). *Isis and the Virgin Mary*: Dunand F. (2000) "D'Isis à la vierge Marie", in *Isis. Mère des Dieux* (Paris 2000) 161–68. *The Persistence of the Isis Cult*: Krüger M. A. (1903) ed. *Zacharie le Scholastique, vie de Sévère* (Patrologia Orientalis 2.1) (Paris 1903) 7–115.

Sol Invictus: Berrens S. (2004) *Sonnenkult und Kaisertum von den Severern bis zu Constantin I (193–227 n. Chr.)* (Historia Einzelschriften 185) (Stuttgart 2004); Halsberghe G. G. (1972) *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain) (Leiden 1972). *Sol and Constantine*: Bergmann M. (2006) "Konstantin und der Sonnengott. Die Aussagen der Bildzeugnisse", in *Konstantin der Grosse. Geschichte-Archäologie-Rezeption. Internationales Kolloquium von 10.–15. Oktober 2005 an der Universität Trier zur Landesausstellung Rheinland-Pfalz "Konstantin der Grosse"*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Schriftenreihe des Rheinischen Landesmuseums Trier 32) (Trier 2006) 143–61. *Constantine and Sunday*: Girardet K. M. (2007) "Von Sonnen-Tag zum

Sonntag. Der ‘dies solis’ in Gesetzgebung und Politik Konstantins d. Gr.”, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 11 (2007) 279–310. *Sol and Christ*: Wallraff M. (2001) *Christus versus Sol. Sonnevenerung und Christentum in der Spätantike* (JAC, Ergänzungsband 32) (Münster 2001). *Sol and other Cults*: Fauth W. (1995) *Helios Megistos. Zur synkretistischen Theologie der Spätantike* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 125) (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1995).

Priests

One of the consequences of the syncretising tendency of late pagan cults was that their priesthoods also became assimilated, particularly in the 4th c. This is discussed in Croke and Harries (1982) concerning Rome, and more generally by Wardman (1986) and Matthews (1973). Due to the transformation of the imperial cult, Christians could also participate in its activities and hold priesthoods within it (Fowden 1998). Although mainly concentrating on an earlier period, Beard and North (1990) is also useful.

General: Beard M. and North J. A. (1990) edd. *Pagan Priests. Religion and Power in the Ancient World* (New York 1990); Rüpke J. (2008) *Fasti Sacerdotum: a Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Religious Officials in the City of Rome, 300 B.C. to A.D. 499* (transl. from German, D. Richardson) (Oxford 2008); Vanggaard J. H. (1988) *The Flamen: a Study in the History and Sociology of Roman Religion* (Copenhagen 1988). Van Haepere F. (2002) *La collège pontifical (3ème s. a. C.-4ème s. p. C.): contribution à l'étude de la religion publique romaine* (Brussels 2002).

Assimilation: Croke B. and Harries J. (1982) *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome* (Sydney 1982) 98–121; Matthews J. F. (1973) “Symmachus and the oriental cults”, *JRS* 63 (1973) 175–95; Wardman A. (1986) “Pagan priesthood in the later empire”, in *Pagan Gods and Shrines of the Roman Empire*, edd. M. Henig and A. King (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 8) (Oxford 1986) 257–62.

Priesthoods for Christians: Fowden G. (1993) *Empire to Commonwealth* (Princeton and Chichester 1993) 48–49; Fowden G. (1998) “Polytheist religion and philosophy”, in *CAH 13: The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge and New York 1998) 552.

Asceticism, Holy Men and Late Antique Biography

A common feature of the intellectual landscape of Late Antiquity was the importance given to the ascetic holy man. Christians and non-Christians alike were convinced that ascetic discipline was the path to spiritual and intellectual enlightenment, as pointed out by Brown (1998). The radical physical asceticism of the 2nd c. A.D. was now out

of favour, but an intellectual asceticism was embraced. For an understanding of the functioning of ascetism, holy men and their role in the late antique world, Brown (1971 and 1998), Fowden (1982) and Kirschner (1984) are essential reading. Concerning pagan holy men, there is Musurillo (1979). Zanker (2000) explains the transformation of images of philosophers into images of 'God'. Good introductory works for asceticism and the evidence for it are to be found in Wimbush and Valantasis (1995) and in Wimbush (1990), although these concentrate mainly on Christianity. The transformation of asceticism into an 'acceptable' form is described by Francis (1995).

The importance that was given to such holy men, (but also to emperors, church leaders and saints) and their relevance for late ancient society, is reflected in the amount of bibliographical works and lives that were produced in their honour. The similarities that emerged between older 'classical' biographies and biblical texts are noted within a volume edited by McGing and Mossman (2006). For general reading on the subject and the relationship between biography and holy men, see Cox (1983) and the more recent Hägg *et al.* (2000).

Asceticism in Late Antiquity: Brown P. (1998) "Ascetism: pagan and Christian", in *CAH 13: The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne 1998) 601–31; Jacobs A. S. (2007) "The cultural turn in late ancient studies: gender asceticism, and historiography", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75 (2007) 185–88; Kirschner R. (1984) "The vocation of holiness in Late Antiquity", *VigChr* 38 (2007) 105–24; Meredith A. (1976) "Asceticism: Christian and Greek", *JThS* 27 (1976) 313–32; Valantasis R. (2001) "Demons, adversaries, devils, fishermen: the asceticism of 'authoritative teaching' (NHL VI. 3) in the context of Roman ascetism", *JRel* 81 (2001) 549–65; Wimbush V. L. (1990) ed. *Ascetic Behaviour in Greco-Roman Antiquity: a Sourcebook* (Minneapolis 1990); Wimbush, V. L. and Valantasis R. (1995) edd. *Asceticism* (New York and Oxford 1990).

Asceticism in the 2nd c.: Francis J. A. (1995) *Subversive Virtue. Ascetism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, Penn. 1995).

Holy Men: Brown P. (1971) "The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity", *JRS* 61 (1971) 80–101; Fowden G. (1982) "The pagan holy man in late antique society", *JHS* 102 (1982) 33–59; Musurillo H. A. (1979) *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs. Acta Alexandrinorum* (Oxford 1979).

Philosopher Images to Divine Images: Zanker P. (2000) "Dal culto della 'paideia' alla visione di Dio", in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 407–12.

Biography: Cox P. (1983) *Biography in Late Antiquity: a Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1983); Hägg T., Rousseau P. and Høgel C. (2000) edd. *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 31) (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2000); Higgins J.

(2008) Review of McGing and Mossman, *The Limits of Ancient Biography*, in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2. N. 51 (2008); McGing B. and Mossman J. (2006) edd. *The Limits of Ancient Biography* (Swansea 2006).

Religious Relations with Jews and Christians

1. Paganism and Christianity

The relationship between Christians and non-Christians is far from straightforward. Despite its search for orthodoxy, Christianity did not consist of one uniform body of belief, just as paganism did not. The idea of two monolithic religious powers competing with each other emerged from the many Christian and non-Christian writers during Late Antiquity who tended to see their religious relationships in terms of competition and conflict.

Yet this period did see some religious conflict, which was carried out in the socio-political as well as religious sphere. But behind all this, in day-to-day life throughout the empire, transformations and changes in ritual practice often took place in a much more gradual way. A religious *koine* and a respect for the religious past, was especially characteristic of the 4th c., while during the 5th c. pagan remnants, as Salzman (2007) describes, were stripped of their non-Christian meaning and reinterpreted so that they became acceptable. For a more detailed study of the roots of Christianity in ancient culture and society, Neyton (1979) serves as a useful starting point. Fox (1986) and MacMullen (1984 and 1997) are important key works for the understanding of Christianisation and its impact on paganism in general. Trombley (1993–94) is also indispensable for a more regional perspective, while Chuvín (2004) provides a shorter and more recent discussion of the matter. Asterius of Amaseia's missionary speech on the martyrdom of Euphemia is examined by Speyer (1971).

Looking solely at the differences between non-Christians and Christians would provide us with an inaccurate picture of late antique society, as there was much they had in common. Brown (1978 and 2004) focuses on the commonalities as well as the disparities between the two groups, departing largely from the textual sources. These shared elements were reflected in texts and iconography, often described culturally as 'Hellenism'. A introductory article on Hellenism is Béatrice (1997), while Bowersock (1990), and critic, of his, Fossum (1999), are also essential reading for the understanding of the phenomenon. More recently, Salzman (2007) discusses the emergence and disappearance of Hellenism.

Contact, Christianisation and Conversion: Chuvin P. (2004) "Christianisation et résistance des cultes traditionnels. Approches actuelles et enjeux historiographiques", in *Hellénisme et Christianisme*, edd. M. Narcy and E. Rebillard (Mythes, Imaginaires, Religions) (Villeneuve d'Ascq 2004) 15–34; Fox R. (1986) *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century A.D. to the Conversion of Constantine* (London and New York 1986); MacMullen R. (1984) *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven, Connecticut and London 1984); MacMullen R. (1997) *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eight Centuries* (New Haven, Connecticut and London 1997); Speyer W. (1971) "Die Euphemia-Rede des Asterios von Amaseia: eine Missionschrift für gebildete Heiden", *JAC* 14 (1971) 39–47; Trombley F. R. (1993–94) *Hellenistic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 115/1–2) (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1993–94).

Interaction between Paganism/Hellenism and Christianity: Béatrice P. F. (1997) "Hellénisme et christianisme aux premiers siècles de notre ère: parcours méthodologiques et bibliographiques", *Kernos* 10 (1997) 39–56; Bowersock G. W. (1990) *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge and New York 1990); Brown P. (1978) *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1978); Brown P. (2004) *The World of Late Antiquity A.D. 150–750* (London 2004); Burkert W. et al. (1996), *Klassisches Altertum und Antikes Christentum: Probleme einer Übergreifende Religionswissenschaft* (Berlin 1996); Fossum J. (1999) "The myth of eternal rebirth: critical notes on G. W. Bowersock, Hellenism in Late Antiquity", *VigChr* 53 (1999) 305–15; MacMullen R. (1981) *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, Connecticut and London 1981); Neyton A. (1979) *Les clefs païennes du christianisme* (Paris 1979); Piepenbrink K. (2007) *Antike und Christentum* (Darmstadt 2007); Salzman M. R. (2007) "Religious *Koine* and religious dissent in the fourth century", in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. J. Rüpke (Malden, Mass. and Oxford 2007) 109–25.

2. *Tolerance and intolerance*

Tolerance as we speak of it today did not seem to be a constituent part of the late antique religious world (Gaddis 2005). A lot of scholars have investigated the subject of conflict and violence in Late Antiquity, and religious violence in particular. General works on such conflict are Momigliano (1963) and Rokeah (1982), but see also the references mentioned at the beginning of this essay on the evolution of the study of late antique paganism. Concerning the topic of violence, one of the most recent volumes providing an overview is Drake (2006). Frezza (1989) concentrates on the subject of tolerance between Christians and non-Christians and Hahn (2004) discusses the situation in the East.

The literature that looks at intolerance towards non-Christians is huge and is almost solely concentrated on the historiography of later paganism. A good introduction to this subject is Gaddis (2005), which provides an overview of Christian violence and its legitimisation

throughout Late Antiquity, but also a more general survey on the topic of violence in general in this period. Another excellent historical introduction to Christian violence, which also takes a broader look at less visible religious confrontation, is to be found in Brown (1998) and also in two shorter contributions by Drake (1996) and Béatrice (1990). Intolerance from the point of view of Christian apologists is studied in further detail by Barnard (1990), while Paschoud (1990) discusses the pagan version of these events. Violence exercised by the emperor is investigated by Sizgorich (2007), while Drake (2000) and Kofsky (1976) take a closer look at the period of Constantine. It is only from the 5th c. that pagans themselves, and not just the religion they practiced, gradually became the targets. On the persecution of pagans in the East, see Athanassiadi (1993) with regard to immediate reactions and long term effects, and also Rochow (1976).

The literature on religious pluralism however is, generally, a lot smaller: literature which can be interpreted as evidence for religious tension has been the focus for most research. If, however, we move away from this ‘official discourse of the cults’, other interpretations can be argued which reveal much more nuanced positions between Christians and others. This is what Lyman calls “conscious (cultural) negotiation by ancient authors that traditional terms such as syncretism or eclecticism have hidden”.

General Works: *Colloque monothéisme polythéisme—intolérance tolérance: université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. Le 22 mars 1997* (Cahiers des Études Anciennes 33) (Quebec 1997); Drake H. A. (2006) *Violence in Late Antiquity. Perceptions and Practices* (Aldershot 2006); Frezza P. (1989) “L’esperienza della tolleranza religiosa fra pagani e cristiani dal IV al V sec. d.c. nell’ oriente ellenistico”, *Studia et Documenta Historia et Iuris* 55 (1989) 41–97; Hahn J. (2004) *Gewalt und Religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II)* (Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte. Beihefte, N.S. 8) (Berlin 2004); Kahlos M. (2009) *Forbearance and Compulsion: the Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London 2009); Momigliano A. (1963) ed. *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford 1963); Rokeah D. (1982) *Jews, Pagans and Christians in Conflict* (Studia Post-Biblica 33) (Jerusalem and Leiden 1982); Sauer E. (2003) *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World* (Stroud 2003); Stanton G. N. and Stroumsa G. G. (1998) *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge 1998).

Intolerance Against Non-Christians: Athanassiadi P. (1993) “Persecution and response in late paganism: the evidence of Damascius”, *JHS* 113 (1993) 1–29; Athanassiadi P. (2010) *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l’intolérance dans*

l'Antiquité tardive (Paris 2010); Barnard L. W. (1990) "L' intolleranza negli apologisti cristiani con speciale riguardo a Firmico Materno", *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990) 505–21; Béatrice P. F. (1990) "L'intolleranza Cristiana nei confronti dei pagani: un problema storiografico", *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990) 441–47; Brown P. (1998) "Christianization and religious conflict", in *CAH 13: The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne 1998) 632–64; Drake H. A. (1996) "Lambs into lions: explaining Early Christian intolerance", *PastPres* 153 (1996) 3–36; Gaddis M. (2005) *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ. Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2005); Kofsky A. (2000) *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism. Jewish and Christian Perspectives* (Leiden 2000); Paschoud F. (1990) "L'intolérance chrétienne vue et jugée par les païens", *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990) 545–77; Rochow I. (1976) "Die Heidenprozesse unter Kaisern Tiberius II, Konstantinus und Maurikios", in *Studien zum 7 Jahrhundert in Byzanz. Probleme der Herausbildung des Feudalismus*, edd. H. Köpstein, and F. Winkelmann (Berlin 1976) 120–30; Russell J. B. (2007) *New History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics and Pagans* (London 2007); Sizgorich T. (2007) "'Not easily were stones joined by the strongest bonds pulled asunder'. Religious violence and imperial order in the later Roman world", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007) 75–101.

Official Intolerance: Drake H. A. (2000) *Constantine and the Bishops. The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore 2000). *The Actions of Monks:* Frend W. H. C. (1990) "Monks and the end of Greco-Roman paganism in Syria and Egypt", *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990) 469–84.

Religious Pluralism: Lyman R. (2003) "Hellenism and heresy", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003) 209–22; North J. (1992) "The development of religious pluralism", in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, edd. J. Lieu, J. A. North and T. Rajak (London 1992) 174–93.

3. *Religious Identity and the Emergence of the Term 'Paganism'*

It is no coincidence that the term 'paganism' only appears from the 4th c. A.D. Whilst previously there had been no group name for all the different cults that were active throughout the empire, the Christians, growing more confident and ready to distinguish themselves from their rivals, needed to define the non-Christian 'other'. As such, the terms 'pagan' and 'Hellene' appear. A general work on the role of religious identity is Frakes and Digeser (2006), but see also Fowden (2005) and Noethlichs (1998). O'Donnell (1977) sheds more light on the evolution of the term '*paganus*' and its origin.

Late Pagan Identity: Frakes R. M. and D. Digeser (2006) edd. *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity* (Toronto 2006); Fowden G. (2005) "Late polytheism. The worldview", in *CAH 12: The Crisis of Empire, A.D. 193–337* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne 2005) 521–22; Noethlichs K. L. (1998) "Kaisertum und

Heidentum in 5 Jahrhundert", in *Heiden und Christen im 5. Jahrhundert*, edd. J. van Oort, and D. Wyrwa (Studien der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft 5) (Leuven 1998) 1–31; Sandwell I. (2007) *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge 2007).

The Term 'Paganism': O'Donnell J. J. (1977) "'Paganus': evolution and use", *Classical Folia* 31 (1977) 163–69.

4. *Contacts with Judaism*

Judaism too was a monotheistic religion which rejected the Greco-Roman pantheon, but unlike Christianity, the Jews had long been granted a special status within the Roman religious apparatus, mainly due to the antiquity of their religion. As far as the well-being of the Roman empire was concerned, the major difference between Christian and Jewish monotheism was the fact that Christianity quickly became a missionary movement which had formed its own state-like hierarchical structure within the empire by the 3rd c. A.D. After the 1st c. A.D. Jewish revolt, Jews were present in all regions of the Mediterranean but did not pose a threat to the empire's political and religious stability. The relations between Jews and pagans can, as such, be said to be complex, but not antagonistic.

The Jews were able to retain their own identity, but were not an isolated group and were prominent in ancient and late antique Hellenistic culture, as illustrated by Rutgers (1995). An important contribution is also provided by Feldman (1993) who covers the broad field of interaction between Jews and pagans, and also conversion to Judaism (cfr. Rutgers 1998), while the volume edited by Goodman (1998) illustrates the position of Jews in the Roman world more widely. A history of Judaism in Late Antiquity is told by Millar (1992). That Jews were not culturally isolated is well-attested in the archaeological record. Rutgers (1992, 1995) observes that Jews used the same workshops as their pagan and Christian contemporaries and partook in the same civic 'Hellenistic' way of life, albeit slightly adapted to their own customs and iconography.

The essential differences between pagans and Jews did not inhibit interaction and co-operation. From time to time they allied against Christians (e.g. in Alexandria) and Julian sought dialogue with them in his attempt to counter Christian success. This is described in Blancetière (1980). More general pagan views on Judaism can be found in Berchmann (1997) and Stertz (1998). However, relationships between pagans and Jews were not always good. On the beginnings of anti-Semitism, see Gager (1983) and Schäfer (1997). Meleze-Modrzejewski (1981) looks closer at the problem of pagan hostility towards Judaism.

Pagan Contact with Judaism: Edwards D. R. (1996) *Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East* (New York 1996); Feldman L. H. (1993) *Jews and Gentile in the Ancient World. Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton 1993); Goodman M. (1998) ed. *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford 1998); Hopkins K. (1999) *A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London 1999); Lieu J., North J. A. and Rajak T. (1992) edd. *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London and New York 1992); Millar F. (1992) "The Jews of the Graeco-Roman diaspora between paganism and Christianity, A.D. 312–438", in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, edd. J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (London and New York 1992) 97–123; *Paganisme, judaïsme, christianisme: influences et affrontements dans le monde antique. Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris 1978).

Judaism and Hellenistic Culture: Frey J., Schwartz D. R. and Gripentrog S. (2007) *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden 2007); Johnson S. R. (2004) *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity. Third Maccabees in its Cultural Context* (Berkeley and London 2004); Rutgers L. V. (1992) "Archaeological evidence for the interaction of Jews and non-Jews in Late Antiquity", *AJA* 96 (1992) 101–18; Rutgers, L. V. (1995) *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome. Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 126) (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1995); Rutgers L. V. (1998) *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 20) (Leuven 1998); Wendland P. (1912) *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum; Die urchristlichen Literaturformen* (Tübingen 1912).

Pagan Views of Judaism: Berchmann R. M. (1997) "Pagan philosophical views of Jews and Judaism", in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, N.S. 12, ed. J. Neusner (Tampa, Florida 1997) 1–74; Blanchetière F. (1980) "Julien philhellène, philo-sémite, anti-Chrétien: l'affaire du Temple de Jérusalem", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980) 61–68; Stertz S. A. (1998) "Pagan historians on Judaism in ancient times", in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, N.S. 14, ed. J. Neusner (Tampa, Florida 1998) 21–57.

Violence, Judeophobia and Anti-Semitism: Gager J. G. (1983) *The Origins of Anti-Semitism. Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York and Oxford 1983); Halbertal M. (1998) "Coexisting with the enemy: Jews and pagans in the Mishnah", in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, edd. G. Stanton and G. G. Stroumsa (Cambridge 1998) 159–72; Meleze-Modrzejewski J. (1981) "Sur l'antisémitisme païen", in *Pour L. Poliakov. Le racisme, myths et sciences* (Brussels 1981) 411–39; Schäfer P. (1997) *Judeophobia. Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World*. (Cambridge and London 1997).

Late Pagan Historiography

Late antique religious opinion and criticism of the 'pagan' world view come to us through Christian orators and writers. However, in many cases, these individuals were responding to, and in discussion with, contemporary non-Christian intellectuals. The writings of several pagans,

for example Celsus, are only known through Christian sources. For the later pagan historiography and its relationship to Christian thought, the volume edited by Marasco (2006) is of importance for the situation from the 4th to 6th centuries, while Janiszewski (2006) focuses on the 3rd and 4th centuries. For the 4th c. there is the sourcebook by Lieu and Montserrat (1996). The evolution of pagan historiography and rhetoric has produced some useful scholarly studies. For the early centuries, Benko (1980) and Hargis (1999) discuss the critics of Christianity in its first two centuries. Pagan reflections on the New Testament are collected by Cook (2000). For other pagan references to the Bible, see Rinaldi (1989).

Celsus, the important 2nd c. A.D. pagan philosopher, warns of the danger that Christianity constitutes for the well-being of society. Although his writings are lost, much can be reconstructed through the reaction of his Christian opponent Origen. A recent study of Celsus is produced by Lona (2005). Porphyry was the last pagan philosopher that can be said to have had an influence on imperial policy. He was an advisor to Diocletian and provided the philosophical justification the emperor needed during his persecution of Christians. Sodano (1993) is an important work that considers Porphyry's motivations and goals. Den Boer (1974) describes Porphyry as a historian, while Scott (2005) primarily stresses his philosophical motivations. Digeser (1988) describes the support Porphyry gave to Diocletian and the opponent he found in Lactantius, who supported Constantine. Probably one of the best known late pagan testimonies is provided by the Antiochene rhetor Libanius, whose ideal *polis* was a polytheist one. An introduction to the work and thought of Libanius is Bradbury (2004) and Wintjes (2005). The correspondence between Libanius and Julian is described by Criscuolo (2006), Limberis (2000) and Wiemer (1995). For Libanius as a teacher of rhetoric to both pagans and Christians, see Cribiore (2007), Petit (1956) and see also 'Antioch' in the other bibliographic essay below (Mulryan (this volume)).

The religious positions of ancient authors are often clearly discernable, and within scholarly literature a lot of attention is given to the vigour in which they defend their belief system. This vigour is very apparent in Libanius, Julian or Augustine, for example. The opposite is true for Palladas, however, a 4th c. poet residing in Alexandria who evokes no great enthusiasm for Christianity or 'paganism'. As such, his religious views and his conversion have been the topic of much discussion (cfr. Bowra (1959), Cameron (1964 and 1965) and Luck (1958)).

A powerful opponent of Julian's political decisions was Gregory of Nazianzus. Julian claimed the whole of Greek literature was solely for polytheists, as the true heirs of that culture and education, a view Gregory strenuously objected to (Cribiore (2007)). On Julian's religious polemicism, see the contributions of Elms (2003), Limberis (2000) and Lugaresi (1997).

After Julian's failed pagan counter-attack, Christianity had the monopoly on acceptable belief, and some pagan authors chose (or were forced) to be more conciliatory towards Christianity in order for their faith to survive. Themistius' writings illustrate this nicely. He emphasised moderation, adapted Christian ideas into his own and argued for tolerance toward the non-Christian cults. Ando (1996) points to the use of 'Christian language' in Themistius as an attempt to defend paganism, while Sterz (1976) emphasises Themistius' adaptation of Christian ideas. Another plea for tolerance was made by Symmachus. He reacted against several anti-pagan measures, notably the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Senate House in Rome. A contemporary response to his writings was provided by Ambrose, the bishop of Milan. Evenepoel (1998–99) discusses Symmachus' reaction to the anti-pagan legislation while Klein (1971) focuses more attention on the figure of Symmachus himself. Klein (1972) also sheds some light on the dispute surrounding the Altar of Victory, of which Symmachus reports.

Ammianus Marcellinus, however, a historian who also lived during the 4th c., tried to explain and justify Julian's policies. General considerations of Ammianus' writings are made by Drijvers and Hunt (1999) and Matthews (1989). Ammianus' defence of Julian and his views of other emperors are described by Den Boeft *et al.* (2007) and Selem (1979), while Neri (1985) and Rilke (1987) focus on his position towards paganism and Christianity. Another supporter of Julian's policy was Eunapius. He wrote a history concerning the lives of philosophers and sophists (Penella (1990)). Eunapius, just like other late pagan historians, strongly held onto the paganism of their ancestors. As such, when Christianity is discussed, it is solely in a negative manner (Liebeschuetz 2006); his work is especially useful for our knowledge of 4th c. pagans and philosophers. Another of these philosophers, Himerius, has left us several orations illustrating the ongoing philosophical and sophistic activity during the 4th c. as illustrated by Barnes (1987). Himerius' orations have recently been collected and translated by Penella (2007).

During the 5th c., sources looking at religious discourse become scarcer. Within this same century Horapollon, an Egyptian pagan, published two books on the interpretation of hieroglyphs. His treatises reflect the self assured position of 5th c. pagans in Egypt in search of a religious identity using elements from the Egyptian and Hellenistic past (Bowersock (1999)). From the late 5th c. we have Zosimus' 'New History'. From this time pagan literature largely disappears. For a collection of the pagan sources, see Trombley (1993–94), and for a general overview see above under 'Sources' and 'Reference Works'.

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Pagan Writers on Christianity: Celsus: Andresen C. (1955) *Logos und Nomos: die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum* (Berlin 1955); Fédou M. (1988) *Christianisme et religions païennes dans le Contre Celse d'Origène* (Paris 1988); Lona H. E. (2005) *Die wahre Lehre des Kelsos* (Kommentar zu Frühchristlichen Apologeten, Erg. 1) (Freiburg, Basel and Vienna 2005); Watson G. (1992) "Celsus and the philosophical opposition to Christianity", *Irish Theological Quarterly* 58 (1992) 165–79. Porphyry: Berchman R. M. (2005) *Porphyry Against the Christians* (Leiden 2005); Den Boer W. (1974) "A pagan historian and his enemies: Porphyry against the Christians", *CP* 69 (1974) 198–208; Digeser E. de P. (1998) "Lactantius, Porphyry, and the debate over religious toleration", *JRS* 88 (1998) 129–46; Goulet R. (2004) "Hypothèses récentes sur le traité de Porphyre *Contre les Chrétiens*", in *Hellénisme et Christianisme*. edd. M. Narcy and É. Rebillard (Mythes, Imaginaires, Religions) (Villeneuve d'Ascq 2004) 61–109; Sodano A. R. (1993) *Porfirio: Vangelo di un Pagano* (Milan 1993); Scott J. M. (2005) "Porphyry on Christians and others: 'barbarian wisdom', identity

politics, and anti-Christian polemics on the eve of the great persecution", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005) 277–314. *Libanius*: Bradbury S. (2004) *Selected Letters of Libanius from the Age of Constantius to Julian* (Translated Texts for Historians 41) (Liverpool and Philadelphia 2004); Cribiore R. (2007) *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton 2007); Criscuolo U. (2006) "Libanius et la philosophie de Julien", *Topoi*, suppl. 7 (2006) 103–12; Limberis V. (2000) "'Religion' as the cipher of identity: the cases of emperor Julian, Libanius, and Gregory Nazianzus", *HThR* 93 (2000) 373–400; Petit P. (1955) *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IV^e siècle après J.-C.* (Paris 1955); Petit P. (1956) *Les étudiants de Libanius* (Paris 1956); Sizgorich T. (2007) "'Not easily were stones joined by the strongest bonds pulled asunder'. Religious violence and imperial order in the later Roman world", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15,1 (2007) 75–101; Wiemer, H.-U. (1995) *Libanios und Julian. Studien zu Verhältnis von Rhetorik und Politik im vierten Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (München 1995); Wintjes J. (2005) *Das Leben des Libanios*. (Historische Studien der Universität Würzburg 2) (Rahden 2005); for more on Libanius and Antioch see further references under the regional surveys in the bibliographic essay below (Mulryan (this volume)) under 'Middle East and Levant'. *Palladas*: Bowra C. M. (1959) "Palladas and Christianity", *ProcBritAc* 45 (1959) 255–67; Bowra C. M. (1960) "Palladas on Tyche", *CQ*, N.S. 10 (1960) 118–28; Cameron A. (1964) "Palladas and the Nikai", *JHS* 84 (1964) 54–62; Cameron A. (1965) "Notes on Palladas", *CQ*, N.S. 15 (1965) 215–29; Cameron A. (1965) "Palladas and Christian polemic", *JRS* 55 (1965) 17–30; Luck G. (1958) "Palladas: Christian or pagan?", *HSCP* 53 (1958) 455–71. *Julian*: Elm S. (2003) "Hellenism and historiography: Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian in dialogue", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003) 493–515; Limberis V. (2000) "'Religion' as the cipher of identity: the cases of emperor Julian, Libanius, and Gregory Nazianzus", *HThR* 93 (2000) 373–400; Lugaresi L. (1997) ed. *Gregorio di Nazianzo: la morte di Giuliano l'Apostata*. (Biblioteca Patristica 29) (Fiesole 1997). *Themistius*: Ando C. (1996) "Pagan apologetics and Christian intolerance in the ages of Themistius and Augustine", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996) 171–207; Stertz S. A. (1976) "Themistius: a Hellenic philosopher-statesman in the Christian Roman empire", *CJ* 71 (1976) 349–58. *Symmachus*: Evenepoel W. (1998–99) "Ambrose vs. Symmachus. Christians and pagans in A.D. 384", *Ancient Society* 29 (1998–99) 283–306; Klein R. (1971) *Symmachus. Eine tragische Gestalt des ausgehenden Heidentums* (Impulse der Forschung 2) (Darmstadt 1971); Klein R. (1972) *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar. Die dritte Relatio des Symmachus und die Briefe 17, 18 und 57 des Mailänder Bischofs Ambrosius* (Darmstadt 1972); Paschoud F. (1986) ed. *Symmaque. A' l'occasion du mille six centième anniversaire du conflit de l'autel de la Victoire* (Paris 1986). *Ammianus Marcellinus*: Drijvers J. W. and Hunt D. (1999) edd. *The Late Roman World and its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London and New York 1999) 232–46; Matthews J. (1989) *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (Baltimore 1989); Syme R. (1986) *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford 1968); Thompson E. A. (1968) *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Groningen 1968); de Bonfils G. (1986) *Ammiano Marcellino e l'imperatore* (Bari 1986); Den Boeft J., Drijvers J. W. et al. (2007) edd. *Ammianus after Julian. The Reign of Valentinian and*

Valens in Books 26–31 of the Res Gestae (Mnemosyne Supplement 289) (Leiden and Boston 2007); Selem A. (1979) *Giuliano l'apostata nelle "storie" di Ammiano* (Nuovi Saggi 73) (Rome 1979); Neri V. (1985) *Ammiano e il Cristianesimo. Religione e politica nelle 'Res Gestae' di Ammiano Marcellino* (Bologna 1985); Rike R. L. (1987) *Apex Omnium. Religion in the Res Gestae of Ammianus* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1987). *Eunapius of Sardis*: Liebeschuetz J. H. G. W. (2006) *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity: Religion, Barbarians and their Historiography* (Ashgate 2006); Penella R. J. (1990) *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D. Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds 1990); Sacks K. S. (1986) "The meaning of Eunapius' History", *History and Theory* 25 (1990) 52–67. *Himerius*: Barnes T. D. (1987) "Himerius and the fourth century", *CP* 82 (1987) 206–25; Penella R. (2007) *Man and the World: The Orations of Himerius* (The Transformation of Classical Heritage 43) (Berkeley 2007). *Horapollon*: Bowersock G. W. (1999) "Horapollon", in *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World*, edd. G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1999) 497; Maspero J. (1914) "Horapollon et la fin du paganisme Egyptien", *BIFAO* 11 (1914) 163–95; Thissen H. T. (2001) ed. *Des niloten Horapollon Hieroglyphenbuch Band 1. Text und Übersetzung* (Munich and Leipzig 2001). *Zosimus*: Goffart W. (1971) "Zosimus, the first historian of Rome's fall", *AHR* 76 (1971) 412–41; Paschoud F. (1971–89) *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle* (Paris 1971–89); Ridley T. D. (1956) *Zosimus. New History. A Translation with Commentary* (Byzantina Australiensia 2) (Canberra 1956); Thompson E. A. (1956) "Zosimus on the end of Roman Britain", *Antiquity* 30 (1956) 163–67.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Sacrifice

Sacrifice was a critical element of pagan worship, and as such symbolised pagan resistance in Late Antiquity. However, sacrifice was under pressure during the period from both the (Christian) imperial authorities and some pagans who had developed a distaste for it. Concerning late sacrifice in general, Harl (1990) looks at its position during the 5th and the 6th c., while the more recent contribution of Stroumsa (2005) primarily focuses on the end of sacrificial practice. Concerning the attitude of Constantine and other emperors towards sacrifice, see above 'The Legal Status of Late Antique Paganism and its Revival under Julian', while for Julian's position towards sacrifice, Bradbury (1995) and Beylache (2002) can be consulted.

In any discussion concerning the decline and survival of sacrifice, the *taurobolium* merits special attention. Connected with the cult of Magna Mater, the *taurobolium* in its final phase, from the second quar-

ter of the 3rd c. onwards, became a ceremony intended to spiritually purify the *tauroboliat* and not to placate a deity. Hence the cult seems to have adapted itself to the changing proclivities of Late Antiquity and its growing ambivalence towards sacrifice. Duthoy's older work (1969) still provides a useful overview, while more recent studies have been undertaken by McLynn (1996) and Simòn (1997).

General Works: Harl K. (1990) "Sacrifice and pagan belief in fifth- and sixth-century Byzantium", *PastPres* 128 (1990) 7–27; Stroumsa G. G. (2005) *La fin du sacrifice. Les mutations religieuses de l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris 2005). *Legal Status:* see "The Legal Status of Late Antique Paganism and its Revival under Julian"; Bradbury S. (1995) "Julian's pagan revival and the decline of blood sacrifice", *Phoenix* 49 (1995) 331–56; Beylache N. (2002) "Sacrifice and theory of sacrifice during the 'pagan reaction'. Julian the emperor", in *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. A. I. Baumgarten (Leiden, Boston and Cologne 2002) 101–26. Goddard C. J. (2006) "The evolution of pagan sanctuaries in late antique Italy (fourth to sixth century AD): a new administrative and legal framework. A paradox." in *Les Cités de l'Italie tardo-antique (IV^e–VI^e siècle)* (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 369) (2006) 281–308.

The Taurobolium: Duthoy R. (1969) *The Taurobolium. Its Evolution and Terminology*, (Études Preliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain 10) (Leiden 1969); McLynn N. (1996) "The fourth century 'taurobolium'", *Phoenix* 50 (1996) 312–30; Rutter J. B. (1968) "The three phases of the taurobolium", *Phoenix* 22 (1968) 226–31; Simón F. M. (1997) "¿Taurobolos vascónicos? La vitalidad pagana en la Tarraconenense durante la segunda mitad del siglo IV", *Gerion* 15 (1997) 297–319.

Survival of Pagan Rites and 'Ritenchristianisierung'

Many tend to see in the survival of ancient customs within Christian ritual behaviour a sign of the persistence of pagan ideas and practices. However, these remnants seem to have been soon deprived of any pagan meaning, or simply not recognised as pagan by contemporaries. These practices can be best understood within the context of late antique culture, which featured an antiquarianism that sought to incorporate traditional customs from centuries past. General introductions to this subject are written by Harl (1995 and 1996). For more specific studies, see above ('Individual Cults'). For the appearance of rites in iconography, see the bibliographic essay below (Mulryan (this volume)) under 'Iconography'. The similarities between Christian and pagan rites are illustrated by Nilsson (1945). Examples include the celebration of Christmas (Molland (1978)) and the marriage ceremony; the latter still contained pagan elements, perhaps because such continuity was important in a rite that was crucial for social cohesion (Natali (1987)). Even more

striking is the persistence of sacrifice and votive donations at the tomb of St. Felix in Nola (Trout (1995)). The convergence of Christian and non-Christian ritual behaviour at the same location is illustrated in a pilgrim's mould from Mamre (Frazer (1979)). Further examples of this can be found in the sections concerning late pagan cults above, and in the other bibliographic essay. Such practices also aroused controversy and opposition from church officials, as illustrated by Harl (1993).

Survival and Christianisation of Rites: Filotas B. (2005) *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature* (Toronto 2005); Liebeschuetz J. H. G. W. (2006) *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity. Religion, Barbarians and their Historiography* (Ashgate 2006); Molland E. (1978) "Jól et noel. La christianisation d' une fête païenne", in *Paganisme, judaïsme, christianisme. Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique. Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris 1978) 308–14; Natali A. (1987) "Mariages chrétiens à Antioche au IV^e siècle", in *Sociabilité, pouvoirs et société. Actes du colloque de Rouen 24/26 novembre 1983*, ed. F. Thélamon (Bois-Guillaume 1987) 111–16; Nilsson M. P. (1945) "Pagan divine service in late paganism", *HThR* 38 (1945) 63–69.

Animal Sacrifice: Trout D. (1995) "Christianizing the Nolan countryside: animal sacrifice at the tomb of St. Felix", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995) 281–98; Goddard C. J. (2002) "Les formes festives de l'allégeance au prince en Italie centrale sous le règne de Constantin: un suicide religieux?", *MEFRA* 114 (2002) 1025–88. Cultic Syncretism: Erikson R. T. (1980) "Syncretistic symbolism and the Christian Roman mosaic at Hinton St. Mary: a closer reading", *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Association* 102 (1980) 43–48; Frazer M. E. (1979) "A syncretistic pilgrim's mould from Mamre (?)", *Gesta* 18 (1979) 137–45.

Non-Christian Rites: Harl M. (1993) "La dénonciation des festivités profanes dans le discours épiscopal et monastique en Orient chrétien, à la fin du IV^e siècle", in *Le déchiffrement du sens* (Paris and Turnhout 1993) 433–53. Byzantine Palace Rites: Liebeschuetz W. (1995) "Pagan mythology in the Christian empire", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995) 193–208; Liebeschuetz W. (1996) "The use of pagan mythology in the Christian empire, with particular reference to the 'Dionysiaca' of Nonnus", in *The Sixth Century. End or Beginning?*, edd. P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (Byzantina Australiensia 10) (Brisbane 1996) 75–91; see also 'Imperial Cult' above. For more specific cases of similar rites see above 'The Mystery Cults' (Cybele, Isis and Sol) and for iconography see 'Pagan Iconography' in the other bibliographic essay below (Mulryan (this volume)).

Festivals, Shows, Games, Music and Dance

In the middle of the 5th c. Christian emperors were continuing to sponsor games which had a semi-pagan character, such as the games at Olympia; the *Maiuma* festival, connected with water and fertility; the *Bota* festival, which originally commemorated Pan; the *Brumalia*, in

commemoration of Dionysus; the Kalends at the beginning of January, which celebrated the winter solstice (Meslin (1970)), and the *Lupercalia* (Duval (1977) and Holleman (1974)). They may have been allowed to continue, but were shorn of any specifically religious content (French 1985) and survived due to their symbolic value and importance in providing social stability and cultural vitality to the cities, the empire and society as a whole. This can be seen in Gaza (Belayche 2004). Yet such activities provoked a hostile reaction from some Christians, who saw them as hedonistic, pagan and demonic. Other forms of popular entertainment came in for similar criticism, such as the circus games, although they too soon lost their religious character. The games remained very popular during the Late Roman period, and their staging continued to play an important part in political life. The importance and popularity in Africa of circus games, and especially the *venationes*, remained remarkably high, something apparent from the large numbers of ceramic plates depicting circus and amphitheatre games from this region (Salomonson (1979)). Recent syntheses on late antique circus games and their function have been written by Goethert (2007) and Tantillo (2000), while Liebeschuetz (2001) focuses mainly on shows and crowd factions.

Gladiator games seem to have become less popular during this period. The possible reasons for this may include the large expense in putting them on (Ville (1960)) and the moral repugnance felt by increasing numbers of Christians towards them. For example, the Colosseum in Rome was seen as a place occupied by pagan demons (Rea (2000)). The late antique theatre is also seen through a Christian filter and their objections to the activities that took place there are prominent in the literature on the subject. Much of this literature was written by Augustine, as is illustrated by Dox (2004) and by Weismann (1972). A more general contribution is Liebeschuetz (2001) who looks at shows and the role of crowd factions in the Late Empire. Pasquato (1967) approaches the subject from a Christian point of view. On music and dance, even less is known, as once more our main source is Christian polemic (Andresen 1974). For the role of music in pagan and Christian ritual, the volume of Quasten (1973) can be consulted.

A source that shows us the mixture of Christian as well as non-Christian festivals that were observed in late antique Rome, is the so-called 'Calendar of 354', made for the Christian aristocrat Valentinus in that year. The calendar illustrates how ancient ceremonies, both imperial and religious, were still celebrated during the 4th c.

(e.g. Magna Mater) and still constituted a part of daily life in the city. The older rites, alongside the new Christian festivities, formed part of a complex festival calendar that illustrates the rich and diverse religious atmosphere of the late antique city (Salzman 1984 and 1990). Salzman (1990) is not only an important contribution to the understanding of the calendar, but provides an essential insight into the functioning of late antique ritual and religious behaviour. Along with the calendar and festivals, how time was measured and perceived was also transformed. On this see Musso (2000).

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Specific festivals: New Year: Meslin M. (1970) *La fête des kalendes de janvier dans l'empire romain. Étude d'un rituel de Nouvel An* (Collection Latomus 115) (Brussels 1970). Lupercalia: Duval Y.-M. (1977) "Des Lupercalia de Constantinople aux Lupercalia de Rome", *Rev. Et. Lat.* 55 (1977) 222–70; Holleman A. W. J. (1974) *Pope Gelasius I and the Lupercalia* (Amsterdam 1974).

Circus games: Ciancio Rossetto P. (2000) "Il Circo Massimo", in *Aurea Roma: dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 126–28; Goethert K. (2007) "Circus und Wagenrennen", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 344–50; Tantillo I. (2000) "I 'munera' in età tardoantica", in *Aurea Roma: dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (2000 Rome) 120–25; Salomonson J. W. (1979) "Les plats de terre cuite africaine du IV^{ème} siècle et les jeux de l'amphitheatre", in *Voluptatem spectandi non perdat sed mutet. Observations sur l'iconographie des martyrs en Afrique romaine* (Amsterdam 1979) 42–50.

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Music and Dance: Andresen C. (1974) "Altchristliche Kritik am Tanz", in *Die Alte Kirche*, edd. H. Frohnes and U. W. Knorr (Munich 1974) 344–76; Quasten J. (1973) *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*. (Washington D.C. 1973).

Festivals and Time: Musso L. (2000) "Governare il tempo naturale. Provvedere alla 'felicitas' terrena. Presiedere l'ordine celeste", in *Aurea Roma: dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 373–88; Salzman M. R. (1984) "The representation of April in the Calendar of 354", *AJA* 88 (1984) 43–50; Salzman M. R. (1990) *On Roman Time. The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford 1990).

Oracles

The restrictions on divination, proclaimed by Theodosius in A.D. 391, were also of major significance for the continuity of the oracles. The Didyma oracle, investigated by Grégoire (1939) and more recently by Fontenrose (1988), must have come to an end around this time. This doesn't necessarily mean that its demise was due to official restrictions alone, as such practices were already largely out of fashion. The oracles of Delphi and Claros are both said to have come to an end in the 4th c. However, the reputation of the Delos oracle in fact increased during Late Antiquity and its consultation continued into the 4th and even into the 5th c., as reported by Gregory (1983). Julian tried to revive the use of oracles, but they were no longer in favour and their decline continued after Julian's death. The oracles provided a divine voice that favoured the pagan arguments against Christianity, and many of these utterances were collected by Porphyry. Several centuries earlier, Plutarch was already writing about their demise, however (Sieveking *et al.* 1997). In its defence, Christianity naturally rejected the oracles, but also tried to appropriate the tradition that went with them. As such the oracles became a plaything between neo-Platonists and anti-pagan Christians.

A general introduction to oracles in Late Antiquity is Athanassiadi (1989–90) and Athanassiadi (1992) which focuses more precisely on the transformation of oracles and the shift of authority connected with them. A more recent larger study which provides a general overview of the late antique oracular tradition is Busine (2005) who looks at oracles and their transformation from the 2nd to the 6th c. with a particular

emphasis on Didyma and Claros, and how oracular revelations were used in religious polemic. In many ways oracles reflected the religious tensions of the period, and the visions associated with them are investigated by Chadwick (1984). Other oracles in Asia Minor are discussed in the volume of Parke (1985)—a mainly historical contribution that focuses primarily on the Didyma and Claros oracles once more—while the oracle of Apollo Sarpedonius is investigated by Dagron (1978). For the Egyptian oracles see Dunand (1997).

General: Athanassiadi P. (1989–90) “The fate of oracles in Late Antiquity”, *Deltion Christianikès Archaïologikès Elaíreias* 115 (1989–90) 271–78; Athanassiadi P. (1992) “Philosophers and oracles: shifts in authority in late paganism”, *Byzantion* 62 (1992) 45–62; Busine A. (2005) *Paroles d’Apollon. Pratiques et traditions oraculaires dans l’Antiquité tardive (II^e–VI^e siècles)* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 156) (Leiden and Boston 2005); Chadwick H. (1984) “Oracles of the end in the conflict of paganism and Christianity in the fourth century”, in *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière. Antiquité païenne et chrétienne* (Geneva 1984) 125–29; Potter D. S. (1990) *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: a Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford 1990); Trombley F. R. et al. (1991) “Oracles”, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3 (New York and Oxford 1991) 1530–31; Wood M. (2004) *The Road to Delphi. The Life and Afterlife of Oracles* (London, 2004). Plutarch: Sieveking W. and Gärtner H. (1997) edd. *Plutarchus. Pythici Dialogi. De E Apud Delphos. De Pythiae Oraculis. De Defectu Oraculorum* (Teubner) (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1997).

Oracles by Region: Greece: Gregory T. E. (1983) “The oracle at Delos in Late Antiquity”, *CW* 76 (1983) 290–91. Asia Minor: Parke H. W. (1985) *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor* (London and Sydney, 1985). For Apollo Sarpedonius see Dagron G. (1978) ed. transl. *Vie et miracles de Sainte Thècle. Texte Grec, traduction et commentaire.* (Subsidia Hagiographica 62) (Brussels 1978) (esp. 80–94). Grégoire H. (1939) “Les pierres qui crient. Les chrétiens et l’oracle de Didymes”, *Byzantion* 14 (1939) 318–21; Fontenrose J. (1988) *Didyma. Apollo’s Oracle, Cult, and Companions* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1988). Egypt: Dunand F. (1997) “La consultation oraculaire en Égypte tardive: l’oracle de Bès à Abydos”, in *Oracles et Prophéties dans l’antiquité: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 15–17 juin 1995*, ed. J.-G. Heintz (Paris 1997) 65–84. Chaldean Oracles: Lewy H. (1978) *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (Paris 1978) and see bibliographic essay by Gywnn in LAA 6. Sibylline Oracles: Lightfoot J. L. (2007) ed. and transl. *The Sibylline Oracles* (Oxford 2007).

The Pagan Elite

The standing and success of wealthy citizens largely depended on their relationship with the imperial authority, its bureaucracy and the political positions they assigned them. Yet, in spite of the imperial adoption

of Christianity it was the ancient aristocratic elite, and especially the senatorial class, that represented one of the last visible strongholds of paganism. Especially in Rome, their influence could still be felt at the end of the 4th c. A.D. For the attitude of the Senate and their importance during Late Antiquity, see at first Humphries (2003) and Grünewald (1992) and for broader studies on the Roman West, see Bloch (1963) and Matthews (1975). In the early 5th c., Augustine still considered the pagan elite a threat to Christianity (Lepelley (2001)).

An examination of the cultural world of the late antique elite, whether pagan or Christian, does not show a completely Christianised empire. City life continued to be determined by rituals and feasts (cfr. *Supra*) and by traditional culture: mythological iconography (cfr. *Infra*), poetry, panegyric, letter writing, and so on, were rearranged in order to express a culture of continuity, which surpassed religious boundaries. An excellent starting point for the study of the late antique elite is Brown (2000), as well as the more recent publication of Liebeschuetz (2006), especially chapter 10. More specific archaeological works looking at the way of life of the elite and the role of classical culture and mythology, is tackled in the last part of this essay. A more general bibliography on late antique elite culture, Hellenism, and architecture is collected by Uytterhoeven (2007). Nevertheless, parts of the (older) aristocracy soon began to accept the Christian faith as it became increasingly politically disadvantageous to remain pagan by the end of the 5th c.

Other factors also contributed to the growth of Christianity amongst the elite, such as the diminishing political influence of polytheism and the Senate during the 4th c., both becoming completely detached from their traditional role as custodians of the state's prosperity. At the same time taking part in the imperial administration became a more rewarding political career. For the conversion of the Roman aristocracy, see the excellent Barnes (1995). How the idea of *nobilitas* evolved within aristocratic circles into a Christian context and how this provided the elites with a necessary cognitive bridge for their adoption of Christianity, is pointed out by Salzman (2001). Other essential reading on late paganism is Salzman (1992 and 2002), both essential contributions to the understanding of the late pagan aristocracy and its conversion.

Persistence of the Pagan Aristocracy: Bloch H. (1963) "The pagan revival in the West at the end of the fourth century", in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford 1963) 193–218; Grünewald T. (1992) "Der letzte Kampf des Heidentums in Rom? Zur

postumen Rehabilitation des virius Nicomachus Flavianus”, *Historia* 41 (1992) 462–87; Humphries M. (2003) “Roman senators and absent emperors in Late Antiquity”, *ActaAArtHist* 17 (2003) 27–46; Lepelley C. (2001) “L’aristocratie lettrée païenne: une menace aux yeux d’Augustin (à propos du sermon Dolbeau 26 = Mayence 62)”, in *Aspects de l’Afrique Romaine. Les cites, la vie rurale, le christianisme* (Munera 15) (Bari 2001) 397–413; Liebeschuetz J. H. G. W. (2006) *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity: Religion, Barbarians and Their Historiography* (Ashgate 2006) esp. X; Matthews J. (1975) *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 365–425* (Oxford 1975).

Cultural Unity of the Elite: Brown P. (2000) “The study of elites in Late Antiquity”, *Arethusa* 33 (2000) 321–46; Uytterhoeven I. (2007) “Housing in Late Antiquity: thematic perspectives”, in *Housing in Late Antiquity. From Palaces to Shops*, edd. L. Lavan, L. Özengel *et al.* (Late Antique Archaeology 3.2) (Leiden and Boston 2007) 25–66; see also ‘Pagan Iconography in Art and Material Culture’ in the bibliographic essay below (Mulryan (this volume)).

Aristocratic Conversion: Barnes T. D. (1995) “Statistics and the conversion of the Roman aristocracy”, *JRS* 85 (1995) 135–47; Brown P. (1961) “The Christianisation of the Roman aristocracy”, *JRS* 51 (1961) 1–11; Edbrooke R. O. jr. (1976) “The visit of Constantius II to Rome in 357 and its effect on the pagan Roman senatorial aristocracy”, *AJP* 97 (1976) 10–61; Mathisen R. (2002) Review of Salzman, *Making of a Christian Aristocracy* in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* (2002) 257–78; Salzman M. R. (1992) “How the West was won: the Christianization of the Roman aristocracy in the years after Constantine”, in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 6, ed. C. Deroux (Collection Latomus 217) (Brussels 1992) 451–79; Salzman M. R. (2000) “Elite realities and *mentalités*: the making of a western Christian aristocracy”, *Arethusa* 33 (2000) 347–62; Salzman M. R. (2001) “Competing claims to ‘nobilitas’ in the western empire of the fourth and fifth centuries”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001) 359–85; Salzman M. R. (2002) *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy. Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 2002); Von Haehling R. (1978) *Die Religionszugehörigkeit der hohen Amtsträger des römischen Reiches seit Constantins I. Alleinherrschaft bis zum Ende der Theodosianischen Dynastie* (Bonn 1978).

Burial

It is often assumed that Christians and non-Christians were either buried in separate cemeteries or were buried separately from each other within the same graveyard. The support for this argument can be seen in the Roman catacombs, which are predominantly Christian. During the last decade, however, the theory of separated burials and the rationale as to how this theory took root, has become a research topic itself. Johnson (1997) questions this segregation in death and whether the Church had any official influence on the burial situation at all. The stimulating Rébillard (2003) deconstructs the research history of late

antique burial practices. Following a reinterpretation of the evidence, the study of late antique burial has moved away from a view where the dead were divided by religion, now allowing for the possibility of mixed burial practices and hence of a gradual evolution towards Christian cemeteries. For Rome, where the subject has aroused the most scholarly attention, this is supported by the data from the Vibia catacomb, the burials below St. Peter's basilica in the Vatican, and the via Latina catacomb, which shows evidence for a unifying 'Hellenistic' culture within funeral iconography (cfr. *infra*, 'Iconography').

The excavations below St. Peter's were published by Ghetti *et al.* (1951), while very thorough research on the mausolea there, especially their archaeological and iconographical evolution has been undertaken by Mielsch and Von Hesberg (1986 and 1995). This work is very useful as the iconographical transition on that site can be traced from the 2nd c. A.D. onwards into the early 4th c. A short overview of the burial places, and their structures and characteristics, at the Vatican Necropolis and examples of the religious evolution of the families within the mausolea is provided by Zander (2002). The catacomb of Vibia, with its mixture of graves for Christians and worshippers of the cults of Mithras and Sabazios, was excavated by Ferrua (1971 and 1973). The corpus of paintings from the catacomb of the via Latina is also published by Ferrua (1960, English version in 1990), and discussions can be found in Kötsche-Breitenburch (1986) and in Tronzo (1986).

Catacombs and Christianity: see Gwynn D. (2010) "Religious diversity in Late Antiquity: a bibliographic essay", in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, edd. D. Gwynn and S. Bangert (Late Antique Archaeology 6) (Boston and Leiden 2010).

Separated or Common Burial: Demarsin K. (2006) "Broederlijk naast elkaar in laatantiek Rome", in *Terra Incognita* 1, edd. P. Deckers, N. Goeminne *et al.* (Leuven 2006) 71–80; Fasola U. M. (1984) "Un tardo cimitero cristiano inserito in una necropoli pagana della via Appia: l'area 'sub divo': la catacomba", *RDAC* 60 (1984) 7–42; Johnson M. J. (1997) "Pagan-Christian burial practices of the fourth century. Shared tombs?", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5 (1997) 37–59; Rebillard É. (2003) *Réligion et sépulture: l'Église, les vivants et les morts dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Civilisations et Sociétés 115) (Paris 2003).

The Vatican Necropolis: Arbeiter A. (1988) *Alt St.-Peter in Geschichte und Wissenschaft. Abfolge der Bauten. Rekonstruktion, Architektur, Programm* (Berlin 1988); Ghetti A., *et al.* (1951) *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano eseguite negli anni 1940–1949* (Vatican City 1951); Merlain O. (1971) *Un souterrain au Vatican* (Paris 1971); Mielsch H. and von Hesberg H. (1986) *Die Heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom. Die Mausoleen A-D* (Memorie 16.1. Atti della

Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia) (Rome 1986); Mielsch H. and von Hesberg H. (1995) *Die Heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom. Die Mausoleen E-I und Z-PSI*. (Memorie 16.2. Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia) (Rome 1995); Perler O. (1953) *Die Mozaiken der Juliergruft im Vatikan* (Freiburger Universitätsreden, N.S. 16) (Freiburg im Breisgau 1953); Prandi A. (1957) *La zona archaeologica della confessio Vaticana. I monumenti del II secolo* (Vatican City 1957); Zander P. (2002) *La necropolis Vaticana*. (Roma Sacra 25. Guida alle Chiese della Città Eterna) (Rome and Naples 2002).

Catacombs: General: Testini P. (1966) *Le catacombe e gli antichi cimiteri cristiani in Roma* (Bologna 1966); Stevenson J (1978) *The Catacombs. Rediscovered Monuments of Early Christianity* (London 1978); Conde Guerri E. (1979) *Los "fossore" de Roma paleocristiana: (estudio iconográfico, epigráfico y social)* (Vatican City 1979). Catacomb of Vibia: Ferrua A. (1971) "La catacomba di Vibia", *RDAC* 47 (1971) 7–62; Ferrua A. (1973) "La catacomba di Vibia", *RDAC* 49 (1973) 131–61. Catacomb of Via Latina: Ferrua A. (1960) *Le pitture della nuova catacomba di via Latina* (Monumenti di Antichità Cristiana 2.8) (Vatican City 1960); Ferrua A. (1991) *The Unknown Catacomb. A Unique Discovery of Early Christian Art* (New Lanark 1991); Kötsche-Breitenburch L. (1976) *Die neue Katakomben an der Via Latina in Rom. Untersuchung zu Ikonographie der alten Wandmalereien* (JBAC. Ergänzungsband 4) (Münster 1976); Tronzo W. (1986) *The Via Latina Catacomb. Imitation and Discontinuity in 4th Century Roman Painting* (Monographs on the Fine Arts 28) (London 1986).

'PAGANISM' IN LATE ANTIQUITY: REGIONAL STUDIES AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Michael Mulryan

INTRODUCTION

Within the study of late antique 'paganism' most work has focused on its evolution throughout the Mediterranean world, while the situation in western Europe has attracted much less attention. In order to generate a complete picture of non-Christian/non-Jewish cults within the Late Empire, our survey will take into account these regions too. It will become clear from this that cultic contact with Christianity cannot be described in terms of conflict alone, precisely because Christians and non-Christians alike still lived within the same late antique cultural milieu.

As the cities in Late Antiquity were going through significant cultural changes, their religious buildings were also undergoing change. Such a phenomenon occurred throughout the empire, albeit at a different pace and in different ways in different regions and cities. A major essay on sacred topography during Late Antiquity and its problems is Ando (2001). For the transformation of religious space within the city, see Brands and Severin (2003), while John Chrysostom's account of the religious transformation of the city, is investigated by Hartney (2003). Religious changes in the countryside have been examined by Frend (1967), but more recently Caseau (2004) has discussed rural temples up to the 6th c., making an important contribution to this subject.

The fate of pagan and secular buildings, their relationship to the changing topography, and more specifically to the newly constructed churches, has drawn a lot of attention, particularly in the East, where evidence is richest. A lot of publications have been dedicated to this desacralisation, destruction and transformation, since the pioneering study of Deichmann (1939). Klein (1963) discusses the position of the Church fathers on the destruction of temples. The Christian triumphalism that the older publications express is now in doubt, and other explanations for the demise of the temples have been proposed. On the fate and evolution of later cult buildings, the articles by Caseau

(1999 and 2004) are of primary importance. Ward-Perkins (1999) addresses the question why temples were adapted and concludes that their conversion into churches was in fact a rare phenomenon, and he later develops the work of Deichmann (Ward-Perkins (2003)). A recent study of the fate and evolution of temples, is Hahn *et al.* (2008), which looks at the wider context of this phenomenon, while Hahn (2001) emphasises the fact that a disinterest in temples and their content and a general lack of care towards these buildings, was a greater contributing factor to their decay than the actions of Christian zealots. In contrast, Sauer (2003) looks at religious iconoclasm, mainly focusing on the archaeological evidence for mithraea. For a comprehensive overview of the attitude of the Church towards pagan idols and shrines, see Thornton (1986).

Several temple complexes, in fact, continued to function until very late in one way or another (cfr. *infra*). Julian, unsurprisingly, made an attempt to restore the decaying temples and revive the oracles, and was supported by Libanius in his plea for the continuous care of the temples. On the reconstruction of temples by Julian, especially in the East, see Arce (1975). Epigraphic evidence for Julian's programme is collected by Oikonomides (1987) and Levenson (1990).

Sacred Topography: *General:* Ando C. (2001) "The palladium and the Pen-tateuch: towards a sacred topography of the later Roman empire", *Phoenix* 55 (2001) 369–410. *The City:* Brands G. and H.-G. Severin (2003) edd. *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung* (Wiesbaden 2003); Hartney A. (2003) *John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City* (London 2003); *The Countryside:* Caseau B. (2004) "The fate of rural temples in Late Antiquity and the Christianisation of the countryside", in *Recent Research on the Late Antique Countryside*, edd. W. Bowden, L. Lavan and C. Machado (Late Antique Archaeology 2) (Leiden and Boston 2004) 105–44; Frend W. H. C. (1967) "The winning of the countryside", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 18 (1967) 1–14 (also in Frend, W. H. C. (1980) *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries* (London 1980) II). *Reorganisation and Survival:* Ward-Perkins B. (1999) "Re-using the architectural legacy of the past, entre idéologie et pragmatisme", in *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, edd. G. P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins (Leiden 1999) 225–44.

The Fate of Temples: Caseau B. (1999) "Sacred landscapes", in *Interpreting Late Antiquity. Essays on the Post-Classical World*, edd. G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1999) 21–59; Saradi-Mendelovici H. (1990) "Christian attitudes toward pagan monuments in Late Antiquity and their legacy in later Byzantine centuries", *DOP* 44 (1990) 47–61; Sotinel C. (2000) "La disparition des lieux de culte païens", in *Les cultes polythéistes dans l'adriatique romaine*, edd. C. Delplace and F. Tassaux (Bordeaux 2000) 263–74; Thornton T. C. G. (1986) "The destruction of idols—sinful

or meritorious?”, *JThS* N.S. 37 (1986) 121–29. *Desacralisation and Destruction*: Caseau B. (1999) “Polemein Lithois. La désacralisation des espaces et des objets religieux païens durant l’antiquité tardive”, in *Le sacré et son inscription dans l’espace à Byzance et en Occident. Études comparées*, ed. M. Kaplan (Byzantia Sorbonensia 18) (Paris 1999) 61–123; Hahn J., Emmel S. and Gotter U. (2008) edd. *From Temple to Church. Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 163) (Leiden and Boston 2008); Klein R. (1993) “Spätantike Tempelzerstörungen im Widerspruch christlicher Urteile”, in *Studia Patristica* (Leuven 1993) 135–42; Hahn J. (2001) “Tempelzerstörung und Tempelreinigung in der Spätantike”, in *Kult, Konflikt und Versöhnung. Beiträge zur kultischen Sühne in religiösen, sozialen und politischen Auseinandersetzungen des antiken Mittelmeerraumes*, ed. R. Albert (Arbeitskreis zur Erforschung der Religions- und Kulturgeschichte des Antiken Vorderen Orients 493.2. AOAT. Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments 285) (Münster 2001) 271–86; Pagoulatos G. (1994) “The destruction and conversion of ancient temples to Christian churches during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries”, *Theologia* 65 (1994) 152–70; Sauer E. (2003) *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World* (Stroud 2003).

The Transformation of Sacred Space: Audin P. (1984) “La réutilisation des sites antiques par les églises”, in *Actes du Colloque, ‘Ethnohistoire et Archéologie’*, ed. R. Chevallier (Caesarodunum 19) (Tours 1984) 63–107; Caillet J.-P. (1996) “La transformation en églises d’édifices publics et de temples à la fin de l’Antiquité”, in *Charlemagne (Actes du colloque tenu à l’Université de Paris X-Nanterre, les 1, 2 et 3 avril 1993)*, ed. C. Lepelley (Bari 1996) 191–211; Dally O. (2003) “‘Pflege’ und Umnutzung heidnischer Tempel in der Spätantike”, in *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung. Symposium vom 14. bis 16. Februar 2000 in Halle/Saale*, edd. G. Brands and H. G. Severin (Spätantike-frühes Christentum-Byzanz. Kunst im ersten Jahrtausend 11) (Wiesbaden 2003) 97–114; Deichmann F. W. (1939) “Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern”, *JdI* 54 (1939) 105–36; Gandolfo F. (1989) “Luoghi dei santi e luoghi dei demoni: il riuso dei tempi nel medioevo”, in *Santi e demoni nell’alto medioevo occidentale (Secoli V–XI)* (Spoleto 1989) 883–916; Hanson R. P. C. (1978) “The transformation of pagan temples into churches in the Early Christian centuries”, *JSS* 23 (1978) 257–67; Karivieri A. (2002) “From pagan shrines to Christian churches: methods of conversion”, in *Ecclesiae urbis, Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV–X secolo), Roma 4–10 settembre 2000*, edd. F. Guidobaldi and A. G. Guidobaldi (Studi di Antichità Cristiana 59) (Vatican City 2002) 77–84; Meier H. R. (1996) “Alte Tempel-neue Kulte: Zum Schutz obsoletter Sakralbauten in der Spätantike und zur Adaption alter Bauten an der christlichen Kult”, in *Innovation in der Spätantike* (Wiesbaden 1996) 363–76; Ward-Perkins B. (2003) “Reconfiguring sacred space: from pagan shrines to Christian churches”, in *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung. Symposium vom 14. bis 16. Februar 2000 in Halle/Saale*, edd. G. Brands and H.-G. Severin (2003) 285–90.

Restoration under Julian: Levenson D. (1990) “Julian’s attempt to rebuild a temple: an inventory of ancient and medieval sources”, in *Of Scribes and Scrolls*,

edd. H. Attridge *et al.* (Lanham, Maryland 1990) 261–79; Oikonomides A. N. (1987) “Ancient inscriptions recording the restoration of Greco-Roman shrines by the emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus (361–363 A.D.)”, *AncW* 15 (1987) 37–42; Arce J. (1975) “Reconstrucciones de templos paganos en época del emperador Juliano (361–363 d.C.)”, in *Revista Storica dell’ Antichità* 5 (1975) 201–15; Balty J. and Balty J.-C. (1982) “Une programme philosophique sous la cathédrale d’Apamée: l’ensemble néo-platonicien de l’empereur Julien”, in *Texte et Image. Actes du colloque international de Chantilly (13–15 octobre 1982)* (Paris 1984) 167–76.

THE WESTERN EMPIRE

No part of the empire was quickly Christianised, but the process in the West can be said to have been slower than elsewhere. The problems Christianity faced in the western empire might be partly due to the fact that Christianity’s ethical and universalist dogma was far removed from the religions already existing within the populations of the West as discussed in Russell (1993). As Maximus of Turin (405) attests, the non-Christian religions were deeply rooted in local cultures and were not going to be easily replaced (Hillgarth (1986) 56).

The fate of temples in the West is not as well-understood as those in the East; their lack of preservation in western Europe has a lot to do with this. Also, when the topic of temple destruction arises in western sources it appears to be more of a literary tool rather than an archaeological reality, as argued by Sotinel (2004) in her essay on the demise of sanctuaries in the Roman West. Concerning the question of the acculturation and adaptation of Christianity, Noort (1993) looks at this in the context of north-western Europe (Scandinavia, Gaul, among the Anglo-Saxons, and northern and southern German territories). Jones and Pennick (1995) sketch the background of paganism throughout Europe, while another important volume on the conversion of Europe in English is Carver (2003), which describes the process of conversion in the different regions of the continent. For the persistence of paganism and conversion, see Milis (1998) who looks at the first missionaries in the West and the archaeological evidence. Schmitzer (2006) is a more recent discussion of paganism in the West.

General Works: Davidson H. E. (1993) *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London and New York 1993); Dowden K. (2000) *European Paganism. The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London and New York 2000); Jones

P. and Pennick N. (1995) *A History of Pagan Europe* (London and New York 1995); Milis L. (1998) ed. *The Pagan Middle Ages* (Woodbridge and Rochester 1998); Schmitzer U. (2006) ed. *Suus cuique mos. Studien zur paganen Kultur des lateinischen Westens im 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Vertumnus, Berliner Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie und zu ihren Nachbargebieten 1) (Göttingen 2006).

Conversion and Contact: Carver M. (2003) ed. *The Cross Goes North. Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, A.D. 300–1300* (York 2003); De Reu M. (1998) "The missionaries: the first contact between paganism and Christianity", in *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. L. Milis (Woodbridge 1998) 13–37; Dierkens A. (1998) "The evidence of archaeology", in *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. L. Milis (Woodbridge 1998) 39–64; Fletcher R. (1998) *The Barbarian Conversion. From Paganism to Christianity* (New York 1998); Hillgarth J. N. (1986) ed. *Christianity and Paganism, 350–750. The Conversion of Western Europe* (Philadelphia 1986); Noort G. (1993) *Germaanse cultuur en christianisatie van Noordwest Europa*. (Instituut voor Missiologie en Oecumenica Research Publication 35) (Utrecht and Leiden 1993); Russel J. C. (1993) *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity. A Socio-historical Approach to Religious Transformation* (New York and Oxford 1993).

The Fate of Temples: Sotinel C. (2004) "La disparition des lieux de culte païens en Occident. Enjeux et méthode," in *Hellénisme et christianisme*, edd. M. Narcy and E. Rebillard (Mythes, Imaginaires, Religions) (Villeneuve d'Ascq 2004) 35–60.

Rome

Despite the movement of the western capital to Milan in the 4th c., and the ever-growing importance of Constantinople, Rome retained a special position in the religious discourse of Late Antiquity. Rome eventually became the Christian capital of the empire, because of its importance in the early growth of Christianity, shown by the early presence of Christian iconography (cfr. above Demarsin (in this volume) 'Catacomb Art') and subsequent large focal churches (see above Demarsin (this volume) 'Old St. Peter and St. John Lateran'). In contrast, the Senate and the Roman elite continued to keep alive the worship of the ancient gods during the 4th c. (for the role of the Senate in the Late Empire, see above Demarsin (this volume) 'The Pagan Elite'). The final removal from the Senate House of the Altar of Victory in A.D. 382 has been considered an important blow to the traditional cults. A history of this cult of Victory, and of the statue, is written by Pohlsander (1969).

Religious relations in Rome cannot simply be defined in terms of conflict alone. Examples of a more gradual religious revolution can

be observed in the burial complex on the via Latina from the 4th c., which contain a mixture of biblical and classical scenes, but also in burial complexes, such as the Vatican or those of Vibia, where Christians and non-Christians were buried alongside each other (cfr. 'Iconography' (*infra*)). Similarly, there is the Calendar of 354 with its mixture of pagan and Christian feasts. At the same time some pagan monuments continued to be restored in the city, notably a temple to Flora or Venus (Mulryan (this volume)). A good starting point for late antique Rome is La Rocca and Ensoli (2000), which contains several articles looking at the religious transformation of Rome, focusing on the archaeology. A general introduction to late paganism in the city can be found in Cameron (1999). The Christianisation of Rome is tackled by Frascchetti (2004), while Curran (2000) shows that the process was gradual and provides a valuable insight into the religious evolution of the city. Evidence for magical behaviour in the 4th c. has also been found in the suburbs of Rome, with the discovery of figurines, lamps and *defixiones*, which reveals the more private aspect of religious life at that time (Piranomonte (2002, 2005 and 2006)).

General Works: Nash E. (1961–62) *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 2 vols. (London 1961–62); Steinby E. M. (1993–2000) ed. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (Rome 1993–2000); La Regina A. *et al.* (2001–2008) edd. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae: Suburbium*, 5 vols (Rome 2001–2008).

Late Antique Rome: Cracco Ruggini L. (2003) "Rome in Late Antiquity: clientship, urban topography, and prosopography", *CP* 98 (2003) 366–82; Curran J. (2000) *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford 2000); Harris W. V. (1999) ed. *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity* (JRA. Supplementary Series 33) (Portsmouth and Rhode Island 1999); Krautheimer R. (1980) *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, 1980); Lançon B. (1995) *Rome dans l'Antiquité tardive (312–604 après J.-C.)* (Paris 1995); La Rocca E. and Ensoli S. (2000) edd. *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana* (Rome 2000); Rollins A. (1991) *Rome in the Fourth Century A.D. An Annotated Bibliography with Historical Overview* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London 1991).

Late Pagan Rome: Aronen J. (1989) "La sopravvivenza dei culti pagani e la topografia cristiana dell'area di giuturna e delle sue adiacenze", in *Lacus Iuturnae*, ed. E. M. Steinby (Pubblicati dalla Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma 12) (Rome 1989) 148–74; Cameron A. (1999) "The last pagans of Rome", in *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. V. Harris (JRA. Supplementary Series 33) (Portsmouth and Rhode Island 1999) 109–21; Lizzi R. (2001) "Paganesimo politico e politica edilizia: la cura urbis nella tarda antichità", in *Atti dell' accademia romanistica costantiniana. XIII convegno internazionale in memoria di André Castagnol* (Naples 2001) 671–707; Mulryan M. J. (2011) "The Temple of Flora or Venus in Rome near the Circus Maximus and the new Christian topography: the 'pagan revival' in action?", in this volume; Nista L. (2000) "Il santuario siriano del Gianicolo", in *Aurea Roma*.

Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 298–300.

The Late Roman Aristocracy: cfr. 'The Pagan Elite' in Demarsin (this volume); Benko S. (1984) *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington, Indiana 1984); Edbrooke R. O. (1976) "The visit of Constantius II to Rome in 357 and its effects on the pagan senatorial aristocracy", *AJP* 97 (1976) 40–61; Fraschetti A. (2004) *La conversione da Roma pagana a Roma cristiana* (Rome 2004); Grünewald T. (1992) "Der letzte Kampf des Heidentums in Rom?", *Historia* 41 (1992) 462–87; Harries J. (1984) "'Treasure in Heaven'. Property and inheritance among senators of late Rome", in *Marriage and Property*, ed. E. M. Craik (Aberdeen 1984) 54–70; Liverani P. (2000) "Vaticano pagano, Vaticano cristiano", in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 295–97; Lizzi Testa R. (2004) *Senatori, popolo, Papi: il governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani* (Bari 2004); Marrazi F. (2000) "Rome in transition: economic and political change in the fourth and fifth centuries", in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West*, ed. J. M. H. Smith. (Leiden 2000) 21–41; Wytzes J. (1977) *Der letzte Kampf des Heidentums in Rom* (EPRO 56) (Leiden 1977).

The Statue and Altar of Victory: Dihle A. (1973) "Zum Streit um den Altar der Viktoria", in *Romanitas et Christianitas*, edd. W. den Boer *et al.* (Amsterdam 1973); Klein R. (1972) *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar* (Darmstadt 1972); Pohl-sander H. (1969) "Victory: the story of a statue", *Historia* 18 (1969) 588–97; Sheridan A. (1966) "The altar of Victory", *AntCl* 35 (1966) 186–206; see also Demarsin (this volume) 'Symmachus'.

Magical Material in the Suburbium of Rome: Piranomonte M. (2002) ed. *Il santuario della Musica e il bosco sacro di Anna Perenna* (Milan 2002); Piranomonte M. (2005) "La fontana sacra di Anna Perenna a Piazza Euclide. Tra religione e magia", in *Professional Sorcerers and their Wares in Imperial Rome. An Archaeology of Magical Practices, Proceedings of The Symposium (Rome, 12th November 2004)*, ed. C.A. Faraone (MHNH 5) (Plaats 2005) 87–104; Piranomonte M. (2006) "Piazza Euclide. La fontana di Anna Perenna", in *Roma. Memorie dal sottosuolo. Ritrovamenti archeologici 1980/2006 (Roma, Olearie Papali 2 dicembre 2006—9 aprile 2007)*, ed. M. A. Tomei (Milan 2006) 190–96.

Italy

Christianisation in the rest of Italy seems to have occurred at two different paces. It appears earliest in the cities (although it took some time for the elites there to embrace the new religion, for example at Acquileia (Sotinel (2005)) but took longer to take hold in the countryside. Barnish (2001) looks closer at the religious transformation of the Italian countryside and especially how the meaning of holiness in the landscape shifted. One case study examines the transformation of a sacred spring to Leucothea. For northern Italy, the figure of Ambrose is an important witness to the Christianisation taking place there and the continuing presence of paganism. Lizzi (1990) looks at this area during his lifetime.

However, during the 4th c., some non-Christian cults apparently went through something of a revival. For example, in Cosa, a building was transformed into a Bacchic shrine and continued to flourish for perhaps another century (Collins-Clinton 1977), and in Nola, Christian veneration was mixed with older pagan traditions (Trout (1995); see also Demarsin (this volume) 'Sacrifice'). Under the rule of Maxentius, in the West, and in particular central Sicily where much of the Roman senatorial class lived, the ancient religious traditions continued to flourish. (Rizzo (2005 and 2006)). For the situation on Syracuse, see Greco (1999). For a general archaeological overview of Italy in Late Antiquity, there is Christie (2006), which addresses the relationship between Christianisation and the ongoing pagan presence and the closing and reuse of temples. Ward-Perkins (1984) looks at the disappearance of some temples and the restoration of others, secular entertainment and the survival and reuse of statues. Concerning the conversion and reutilisation of ancient temples, the articles by Vaes (1984–86 and 1989) are still important.

General: Christie N. (2006) *From Constantine to Charlemagne. An Archaeology of Italy A.D. 300–800* (Aldershot, 2006); Ghilardi M. et al. (2006) edd. *Cité de l'Italie tardo-antique (IV–VI^e siècle): institutions économie, société, culture et religion* (Rome 2006); Ward-Perkins B. (1984) *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy* (Oxford and New York 1984).

Conversion: Barnish S. J. B. (2001) "Religio in stagno: nature, divinity, and the Christianization of the countryside in late antique Italy", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001) 387–402; Lizzi R. (1990) "Ambrose's contemporaries and the Christianization of northern Italy", *JRS* 80 (1990) 151–73; Greco R. (1999) *Pagani e cristiani a Siracusa tra il III e il IV secolo d.c.* (Supplementi a "Kólakos" 16) (Rome 1999); Rizzo F. P. (2005) *Sicilia cristiana dal I al V secolo* 1 (Testimonia Siciliae Antiqua 1.14. Supplementi a Kokalos 17) (Rome 2005); Rizzo F. P. (2006) *Sicilia cristiana. Dal I al V secolo*, 2 (Supplementi a Kokalos 17) (Rome 2006); C. Sotinel (2005) *Identité civique et christianisme: Aquilée du III^e au VI^e siècle* (Rome 2005).

Assimilation of Ritual: Trout D. (1995) "Christianizing the Nolan countryside: animal sacrifice at the tomb of St. Felix," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995) 281–98.

Temples: Collins-Clinton J. (1977) *A Late Antique Shrine of Liber Pater at Cosa*. (EPRO 64) (Leiden 1977); Goddard C. J. (2006) 'The evolution of pagan sanctuaries in late antique Italy (fourth to sixth century A.D.): a new administrative and legal framework. A paradox', in *Les Cités de l'Italie tardo-antique (IV^e–VI^e siècle)* (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 369) (Rome 2006) 281–308; Vaes J. (1984–86) "Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten: ein Forschungsbericht", *Ancient Society* 15–17 (1984–86) 305–443; Vaes J. (1989) "'Nova construere sed amplius vetusta servare': la réutilisation

chrétienne d'édifices antiques (en Italie)", in *Actes du XIe congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne. Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève et Aoste (21–28 sept. 86)*, ed. N. Duval (Rome 1989) 299–319. See 'The Fate of Temples' in Demarsin (this volume).

The Iberian Peninsula

We see a similar picture in the Iberian Peninsula. Indigenous practices were kept alive during the 4th c., and some traditional rites may have been practised up to the 6th c. Isidore of Seville's comments on the pagan gods are studied by McFarlane (1980). The Basque people have been central to much discussion of conversion. They were assumed to have been Christianised only during the 9th and 10th c., but recently Collins (1991) has claimed that this happened much earlier, namely during the 4th or 5th c. On Late Roman Spain, Arce (1982) is the basic work, of which chapter 6 on religion is especially important, attesting to pagan presence in Iberia certainly until the end of the 4th c. A.D., while Meslin (1969) recognises traces of pagan customs in Galicia into the 6th c. Kulikowski (2004) remarks that during Late Antiquity almost all archaeological evidence for Christianity is found outside of cities.

General: Arce J. (1982) *El último siglo de la España romana: 284–409* (Madrid 1982); Bowes K. and Kulikowski M. (2005) edd. *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (Leiden and Boston 2005); Ferreiro A. (2008) *The Visigoths in Gaul and Iberia. A Supplemental Bibliography, 1984–2003* (The Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World 35) (Leiden 2008); Kulikowski M. (2004) *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (Baltimore 2004).

Pagan Persistence: McKenna S. (1938) *Paganism and Pagan Survivals in Spain up to the Fall of the Visigothic Kingdom* (Washington D.C. 1938); Meslin M. (1969) "Persistences païennes en Galice, vers la fin du VI^e siècle", in *Hommages à Marcel Renard 2* (Collection Latomus 102) (Brussels 1969) 512–24.

Conversion, Contact and Conflict: Collins R. (1991) "El Cristianismo y los habitantes de la montañas en época romana", *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 8 (1991) 551–58 (translation in Collins R. (1992) *Law, Culture and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain* (Aldershot and Brookfield, Vermont 1992) IX); González A. (1981) "Las nuevas coordenadas dela polemica pagano-cristiana a fines del siglo quarto: el caso de Prudencio", in *La Religión Romana en Hispania (Symposio organizado por el Instituto de Arqueología del C.S.I.C. del 17 al 19 de diciembre de 1979)* (Madrid 1981) 419–26; García Iglesias L. (1981) "Paganesimo y Cristianesimo en la España Romana", in *La Religion Romana en Hispania (Symposio organizado por el Instituto de Arqueología del C.S.I.C. del 17 al 19 de diciembre de 1979)* (Madrid 1981) 363–79; McFarlane K. N. (1980) "Isidore of Seville on the pagan gods (Origines VIII.11)", *TAPS*, N.S. 70 (1980) 1–40.

Gaul and Germania

In the Germanic regions of Europe local cultic practices can be attested during Late Antiquity, for example amongst the *Treviri*, who retained their indigenous beliefs up to the end of the 4th c. and maybe later. Local gods seem to have been worshipped throughout the 4th c. and temples remained in use, although evidence for the worship of oriental gods in this period is largely absent. Trier and the surrounding area have received a lot of scholarly attention, not only for the Early Imperial period but also for Late Antiquity. Brink (1997) discusses the late antique religious atmosphere around Trier, Cologne and Mainz, stressing the long transition towards Christianity in these regions, while the current *status quaestionis* is set out by Ghetta (2007). For south-west Germany, see Müller and Knaut (1987). For the study of late antique temples in Germany, see Faust (2007).

Caesarius of Arles provides us with vivid testimony of the difficulties a missionary faced during the conversion of Gaul. His initial attempts were not successful, due to the fact that the type of Christianity he wanted to promote did not fit with local customs and culture so that it remained an alien intrusion within a non-Christian society. On Caesarius there is Audin (1983) who examines not only the figure of Caesarius, but also the continuity of non-Christian practice. More recently there is Klingshirn (1994), who shows the limits of Caesarius' attempts at Christianisation. Dierkens (1985) looks at the situation in Neustria, while Rousselle (1990) examines the health of late paganism in Gaul and discusses the final period of active pagan worship in general. For the study of late pagan religion and the longevity of pagan shrines, her study is of great importance. For conversion to Christianity and its assimilation with local cultic practice, see also Van Dam (1985) chapter 3.

Although pagan activities continued, we should not assume that all cult places kept functioning as they did before. Mithraism, and the centres connected with it, were in decline during the 4th c.; its cult places were abandoned for various reasons (military factors, financial difficulties and changing priorities; cfr. Demarsin (this volume) 'The Mystery Cults'), and from the later 3rd c. onwards, other temples seem to have been in material decay. In this way, Christianity was not necessarily the main factor in the abandonment and decline of pagan buildings, whatever Gregory of Tours would like us to believe.

Stancliffe (1979) places the person of Gregory in the broader context of the Christianisation of the Touraine region, whilst Young (1997) looks at what still remained of the 'old ways' in the Gaul of that time. The person of Gregory himself is also examined by Gauthier (1997), who in the same work addresses the subject of religious space and updates the pioneering work on temples in Gaul by Mâle (1950).

Germany, General Works: Brink F. (1997) "Die Anfänge des Christentums in Trier, Köln und Mainz", *TrZ* 60 (1997) 229–54; Gauthier N. (1980) *L'évangélisation des pays de la Moselle* (Bonn 1980); Ghetta M. (2007) "Das Weiterleben der alten Kulte in Trier und Umgebung", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 220–27; Heinen H. (1985) *Trier und das Trevererland in römischer Zeit* (Trier 1985) 343–44, 364–65, 419–20; Müller W. and Knaut M. (1987) *Heiden und Christen. Archäologische Funde zum frühen Christentum in Südwestdeutschland* (Stuttgart 1987).

Temples: Faust S. (2007) "Pagane Tempelbezirke und Kultbauten", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 327–32; Gilles R. (1987) "Römische Bergheiligtümer im Trierer Land- Zu den Auswirkungen der spätantiken Religionspolitik", *TrZ* 50 (1987) 195–254.

Survival of Paganism in Gaul: Dierkens A. (1985) "Les survivances du paganisme", in *La Neustrie. Le pays nord de la Loire, de Dagobert à Charles le Chauve (VII^e–IX^e siècles)*, edd. P. Périn and L.-C. Feffier (Rouen 1985) 142–45; Rousselle A. (1990) *Croire et guérir. La foi en Gaule dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris 1990); Vacanard E. (1899) "L'idolâtrie en Gaule au VI^e et au VII^e siècle", in *Revue des questions historiques* 65 (1899) 424–54; Van Dam R. (1985) *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1985).

Conversion to Christianity: Audin P. (1983) "Césaire d' Arles et le maintien de pratiques païennes dans la Provence du VI^e siècle", in *La patrie gauloise d'Agrippa au VI^{ème} siècle* (Lyon 1983) 327–40; Chevallier R. (1983) "Des dieux gaulois et gallo-romains aux saints du christianisme. Recherches sur la Christianisation des cultes de la Gaule", in *La patrie gauloise d'Agrippa au VI^{ème} siècle* (Lyon 1983) 283–326; Klingshirn W. (1994) *Caesarius of Arles. The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge 1994); Pietri L. (1983) *La ville de Tours du IV^e au VI^e siècle: naissance d'une cité chrétienne* (Rome 1983); Stancliffe C. (1979) "From town to country: the Christianization of the Touraine 370–600", in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford 1979) 43–59; Young B. K. (1997) "Que restait-il de l'ancien paysage religieux à l'époque de Grégoire de Tours?", in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois. Actes du congrès international. Tours, 3–5 novembre 1994*, edd. N. Gauthier and H. Galinié (Tours 1997) 241–50.

Temples: Goodman P. (2011) "Temples in late antique Gaul", in this volume; Horne P. (1981) "Romano-Celtic temples in the third century", in *The*

Roman West in the Third Century. Contributions from Archaeology and History, edd. A. King and M. Henig (BAR-IS 109) (Oxford 1981) 21–26; Mâle E. (1950) *La fin du paganisme en Gaule et les plus anciennes basiliques chrétiennes* (Paris 1950).

Britain and Ireland

As in all regions, local religion in late antique Britain was also a mark of identity and a provider of social cohesion. As we can see throughout Europe, even after Christianity had spread, a lot of older practices still existed, for example the continuing importance attached to trees and to other rites, now syncretised. Karras (1986) emphasises this syncretism, and Watts (1991) focuses on the link between pagan religions and practices within Christianity. The indigenous cults, however, seem to have endured much longer in Britain than in Germany or Gaul, and even resulted in a growing ‘Celtisation’ within Early Christian art and burial customs, as is emphasised by Watts (1998). Cardoso (2004) discusses paganism and its social function from the 5th to 7th c. For the remains of Hellenistic motifs in late antique villas in England, see ‘Mosaics and Opus Sectile’ below.

In Ireland, after Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine around A.D. 431, the country took its decisive step toward Christianity under St. Patrick. However, there is still some debate as to the date of Patrick’s mission. An increasing number of scholars are in favour of a late 5th c. date, like Charles-Edwards (2001). This work is important for the understanding of late antique religion in Ireland, but is not very accessible for non-specialists.

General Works: Frend W. H. C. (1955) *Religion in Roman Britain in the Fourth Century A.D.* (London 1955); Green M. J. (1976) *A Corpus of Religious Material From the Civilian Areas of Roman Britain* (Oxford 1976); Henig M. (1995) *Religion in Roman Britain*, 2nd edn. (London 1995); Knight J. K. (1999) *The End of Antiquity: Archaeology, Society and Religion A.D. 235–700* (Stroud 1999).

Paganism: Cardoso C. F. (2004) “O paganismo anglo-saxão: uma síntese crítica”, *Brathair* 4 (2004) 19–35; Hutton R. (1991) *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles. Their Nature and Legacy* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass. 1991); Wilson D. R. (1992) *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London 1992); Karras R. M. (1986) “Pagan survival and syncretism in the conversion of Saxony” *CHR* 72 (1986) 553–72.

Conversion and Religious Interaction: Charles-Edwards T. (2001) *Early Christian Ireland* (New York 2001); Gilmour L. (2007) ed. *Pagans and Christians from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Papers in Honour of Martin Henig* (BAR-IS 1610) (Oxford 2007); Higham N. J. (1997) *The Convert Kings. Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester 1997); Frend W. H. C. (1992)

"Pagans, Christians and the 'barbarian conspiracy' of A.D. 367 in Roman Britain", *Britannia* 23 (1992) 121–31; Mayr-Harting H. (1991) *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London 1991); Thomas C. (1981) *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500* (Berkeley 1981); Watts D. (1991) *Pagans and Christians in Roman Britain* (London and New York 1991); Watts D. (1998) *Religion in Late Roman Britain. Forces of Change* (London and New York 1998).

Religious Art and Architecture: Bell T. (2005) *The Religious Reuse of Roman Architecture in Early Medieval England* (BAR-BS 390) (Oxford 2005); Croxford B. (2003) "Iconoclasm in Roman Britain?", *Britannia* 34 (2003) 81–95; Henig M. (2006) ed. *Roman Art, Religion and Society: New Studies from the Roman Art Seminar, Oxford 2005* (Oxford 2006); Perring D. (2003) "'Gnosticism' in fourth-century Britain: the Frampton mosaics reconsidered", *Britannia* 34 (2003) 97–127; Toynbee J. M. C. (1986) *The Roman Art Treasures from the Temple of Mithras* (London 1986).

THE EASTERN EMPIRE

As the remains of ancient sites in the East are more visible and better preserved than they are in the West of the empire, and since the evolution of sanctuaries and civic buildings are better attested in the East as well, the late antique transformation of the urban landscape, society and religion have been topics of research for longer in this region than in the West. Furthermore, while Christian missionaries in the West were still searching for a method to convert their populations, Christianity in the East had gained enough (official) influence that by the end of the 4th c. its religious position was assured, meaning that Christian polemicism here generally moved away from confrontation with paganism to conflict within the Church ('Arianism', 'Nestorianism', etc.). Due to the continuing and flourishing literary culture of the East, many written accounts survive describing this formative period of Christianity, the position of late paganism, of philosophy, and of the interaction between Christians and pagans in these eastern regions, especially at Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople.

Although Christianity eventually became the Roman state religion, non-Christian cults were not easily displaced. Different laws restricting non-Christian ritual behaviour had to be reissued several times, while also during the 6th c. Justinian continued to encounter populations that still practised the old rites. Paganism in the Justinianic state has been studied in particular by Irmischer (1981 and 1986). General discussions of paganism in the late antique East are provided by Harl (1990) and by Trombley (1993–94) in his essential work on religion in this region in Late Antiquity. A recent general picture of the 6th c. is

provided by Saradi (2006). Concerning religious conflict in the East, Matthews (1967) presents the example of Maternus Cynegius, a Christian radical under Theodosius I, who took extreme measures against pagans there. More recent archaeological research emphasises the importance of regional and (local) political factors in gaining a better understanding of the evolution of non-Christian religious cults in the East at this time. This appears to have been a complex process, with different cults evolving in different ways.

General Works: Harl K. W. (1990) "Sacrifice and pagan belief in fifth- and sixth-century Byzantium", *PastPres* 128 (1990) 7–27; Irmscher J. (1981) "Paganismus im Justinianischen Reich", *Klio* 63 (1981) 683–88; Irmscher J. (1986) "Heidnische Kontinuität im Justinianischen Staat", in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress: Major Papers* (New York 1986) 17–30; Kaegi W. E. (1966) "The fifth-century twilight of Byzantine paganism", *ClMed* 27 (1966) 243–75; Kaegi W. E. (1982) *Army, Society and Religion in Byzantium* (Variorum Reprints 162) (London 1982); Saradi H. (2006) *The Byzantine City in the Sixth Century. Literary Images and Historical Reality* (Athens 2006); Trombley F. (1993–94) *Hellenistic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 115/1–2) (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1993–94).

Conflict: Fowden G. (1978) "Bishops and temples in the eastern Roman empire 320–435", *JThS* 29 (1978) 53–78; Hahn J. (2004) *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II)* (Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte. Beihefte, N.S. 8) (Berlin 2004); Matthews J. F. (1967) "A pious supporter of Theodosius I: Maternus Cynegius and his family", *JThS* 18 (1967) 438–46.

Greece

During the 4th c., Athens continued to be a centre for rhetoric and philosophy. Himerius, a teacher, from whose work about seventy-nine orations have been preserved, describes life in the city during that time. Until A.D. 529, Athens was the residence of the renowned Platonic school. Despite the closure of the school under Justinian, there have been questions as to whether neo-Platonic teaching also disappeared from that moment (cfr. Cameron (1969), Blumenthal (1978), Castrèn (1999) and Watts (2004), (2006)). Nevertheless, Athens managed to retain its 'pagan' character for a remarkably long time. It became Christianised only very late, and anti-pagan intolerance can be attested in the city only as late as the end of the 5th c. The closure of the academy by Justinian meant the end of one of the last institutions which was not connected with Christian philosophical thinking. This event is interpreted by some scholars as the elimination by

Christianity of an important adversary, but this may not necessarily be the case. By this date, the school had lost a lot of its importance. Its closure, carried out apparently for reasons of educational reform, was initiated by a local complaint and does not seem to have been a centrally directed act against non-Christian philosophy. Castrén (1999) discusses the transformation of Athens during the 5th and the 6th c., including the closure of the school. Watts (2004 and 2006), in contrast to Castrén, suggests that the closure of the school was a rather unremarkable event. In her research on the Athenian Agora, Frantz (1988) sees in Athens a pagan-oriented society during the 5th c. Her findings are nuanced and contested by Fowden (1990).

Also, elsewhere in Greece, the 'old ways' continued for a long time. As is illustrated by Sinn (1999), the sanctuary at Olympia was enlarged in about A.D. 300 and the games continued during the 4th c. Only from the 5th c. are there indications of the presence of Christianity, while in Corinth 'paganism' continued through into the 6th c., forcing Christianity to adapt itself to the local institutions and traditions (Rothaus (2000)). For the Christianisation of Boeotia, see Frank (1989), while Poulsen (1995) reports on the pagans in Late Roman Halikarnassos. Trombley (1985) presents a general overview of the late pagan presence in Greece, where his attention also turns to the countryside.

The overall picture revealed in the evolution of late antique religious space in recent studies is one of pragmatism and a low degree of violence or confrontation. The most recent contribution to this topic is provided by Foschia (2000), where she stresses this pragmatism and the non-violent interaction between religious groups, and Foschia (2006), where, alongside a survey of the current *status quaestionis*, a discussion of religion and conversion can also be found. Other useful works are Mango (1995) on the conversion of the Parthenon, and the Ph.D. dissertation of Deligiannakis (2002) on the sacred landscape and the Christianisation of Achaia during Late Antiquity.

General: Gregory T. E. (1986) "The survival of paganism in Christian Greece: a critical essay", *AJP* 107 (1986) 229–42; Trombley F. R. (1985) "Paganism in the Greek world at the end of Antiquity: the case of rural Anatolia and Greece", *HThR*. 78 (1985) 327–52.

Regional Studies: Boeotia: Frank R. (1989) "Boeotia in Late Antiquity: epigraphic evidence on society, economy, and Christianization", in *Boiotika. Vorträge vom 5. Internationalen Bötien-Kolloquium zu Ehren von Professor Dr. Siegfried Lauffer* (Münchener Arbeiten zur Alte Geschichte 2) (Munich 1989) 215–28. Athens: Castrén P. (1999) "Paganism and Christianity in Athens and vicinity during the fourth to sixth centuries A.D.", in *The Idea and Ideal of the*

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Himerius: Penella R. J. (2007) ed. *Man and the World. The Orations of Himerius* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 43) (Berkeley 2007).

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Eastern Europe: Bulgaria and Caucasus

If late paganism in western Europe is less studied than elsewhere in the ancient world, the situation is even worse for eastern Europe. Very little work in English has been done looking at the characteristics of late non-Christian cults and conversion here. However, the volume edited by Seibt (2002) may serve as a starting point for the study of Christianisation in Armenia, Georgia and Albania during the 4th c., and help to illustrate why Christianity in Armenia, for example, became the state religion much earlier than in the Roman empire. Nikolov (2000) investigates how the Bulgars perceived Christianity before their conversion in the middle of the 9th c. and also the relationship between Christianity and paganism in that region.

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Asia Minor and Constantinople

There are several surviving contemporary accounts that discuss the longevity of non-Christian cults in Asia Minor, although they were often written by Christians. The Life of Hypathius mentions the widespread adherence to pre-Christian cults in early 5th c. Phrygia and mid 5th c. Bithynia (Bartelink (1971)), and in 542 John of Ephesus undertook a missionary voyage into Lydia, Phrygia and Caria. John of Ephesus’ attitude towards pagans is discussed by Whitby (1991), while a more general picture of John is presented by Van Ginkel (1995). Both testimonies attest to the longevity of indigenous non-Christian cults in different regions of Asia Minor. The influence that the pagan religions could exercise on Christian cults is illustrated by Hirschmann (2005) when she investigates the Phrygian regional influences on Monasticism. The pagan presence in 4th c. Cappadocia and the actions of Julian, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus have been studied by Van Dam (2002).

In the cities, by the 4th c., the enthusiasm for the classical pantheon and ritual practices was diminishing. Yet Ancyra (Ankara), remained a centre of classical culture throughout Late Antiquity and one of the

favourite cities of Libanius. Foss (1977) discusses the situation in 4th c. Ankara and how its character changed in a relatively short period. Another city where polytheistic worship continued well into the 5th c. was Aphrodisias. The complete Christianisation of the curial class did not take place until some time between 450 and 529 it seems. Roueché (1989) reconstructs the late antique religious atmosphere of the city based on the epigraphy that survives from this period. The relationship between pagans, Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias is studied by Chaniotis (2002). On Pergamon and the continuing presence of non-Christians there, see especially Koester (1998). In Colossae, many religious cults lived together quite peacefully. As Arnold (1995) points out, this resulted in a rich religious conviviality, with, as a consequence, a lot of syncretistic features between Christians and non-Christians appearing. Constantinople tells a story of its own. As the new capital city in the East it needed a visible classical heritage, and antique statuary, much of which had a pagan flavour, was reused in public spaces in order to cement this (Bassett 2004).

General introductions to late paganism in Asia Minor are provided by Harl (2001), focusing mainly on the cities, and Mitchell (1993). Mitchell's volume uses a wide range of literary and archaeological evidence to describe the different cults and discuss the relationships between pagans, Christians and Jews in Asia Minor, and is an essential work for the understanding of late antique religious relations within this part of the empire. Importantly, Mitchell looks at different regions and regional differences. Concerning the evolution of cult places, Pont (2004) is of particular importance, as she finds evidence for their survival in late 4th and 5th c. Asia Minor, albeit now less overt in their appearance and placement than before. In general, during the transformation of cityscapes in this region, it seems that at first it was the deserted public buildings that were converted into churches, before Christians began to adapt pagan temples (Talloon (2003)). The reasons for adaptation seem to have been mostly because of location: older structures were often situated in visible and strategic places within the old centres, and convenience: good building material was already nearby so one could easily convert a building or erect a new one. For the transformation of the religious cityscape in Asia Minor, see the recent Ph.D. dissertation of Jacobs (2008) and for Pisidia that of Talloon (2003). Concerning temple conversion, other works of importance are Bayliss (2004) for Cilicia and Thür (2003) for Ephesus, while works that look at conversions in Miletus and Pergamon have also been published.

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Textual accounts: Van Ginkel J. J. (1995) *John of Ephesus: A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (Groningen 1995); Whitby M. (1991) "John of Ephesus and the pagans: pagan survivals in the 6th century", in *Paganism in the Later Roman Empire and in Byzantium*, ed. M. Salamon (Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia 1) (Kracow 1991) 111–31. Bartelink G. J. M. (1971) ed. *Callinicos. Vie D' Hypatios* (Sources Chrétiennes 177) (Paris 1971).

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Temples: Vercauteren L. (2006) “De recuperatie van publieke en heidens-religieuze monumenten voor kerken in en rond de Klein-Aziatische steden in de laatantieke periode”, in *Terra Incognita* 1, edd. P. Deckers et al. (Leuven 2006) 269–84. See also papers by Talloen and Vercauteren in this volume.

The Middle East

During the period between A.D. 365 and 425 the religious topography of the Syrian countryside was transformed, although the north-west was Christianised earlier than the southern regions it seems. City life in 4th c. Antioch is described by Libanius, who taught at a philosophical school in the city in the 360s. In his opinion, the ideal city was a polytheistic one. Norman (2000), studying the relationship between Libanius and Antioch, selected some of his orations that illustrate the late antique character of Antioch as Libanius saw it. For more infor-

mation on Libanius, see Demarsin (this volume) under 'Late Pagan Historiography'. Furthermore, the biography of Severus, the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, reports that polytheistic religious activity was still continuing among the elites in the cities of the East during the later 5th c., and that the old cults persisted in rural areas.

On Antioch, see Festugière (1959) in particular, and Liebeschuetz (1988), which focuses on the 6th c. Also the volume by Petit (1955) on city life in 4th c. Antioch, although now rather dated, is still useful. The city of Harran was also able to maintain its ancient cultural traditions even up to the Islamic period (Trombley (1994)). Another general work on late antique Harran is Green (1992), which describes the longevity of the polytheist cult there and its importance, as described by Christian authors. Also the city of Baalbek housed a significant number of polytheist practitioners probably in the 5th, and possibly into the 6th c. (Ragette (1980) and Hajjar (1985)). In Edessa, Christians and pagans initially seem to have lived together rather peacefully, but at the end of the 4th c. the situation became radicalised, with Christians imposing themselves on their pagan neighbours.

A good overview of the religious beliefs in Edessa is still provided by Drijvers (1980), especially chapter 7. Bremmer in his recent volume (2008) illustrates that 'pagans' in the Middle East influenced both Jews and Christians. Concerning the interaction between non-Christian and Christian religious cults in Syria in general, see Feldkeller (1994), which serves as a good introduction. Holum (1996) describes the Christianisation of the Levant, while Drijvers (1982) focuses on the question of the pagan presence in Syria. Concerning Christianisation more widely, Kidner (2001) states that Christianity made its way into the Syrian countryside by an architectural strategy which emphasised tradition and at the same time also renewal. Also consult this work for a reaction to Trombley (1993–94) (cfr. *supra*).

In the ancient world, Palestine was of particular religious significance within the Roman East. The region is often considered Jewish territory, and consequently the pagan cults that were present, are often neglected. The archaeological material however, shows their importance, and demonstrates that the province was a melting pot of non-Christian and Jewish inhabitants, whose cultures interacted with each other. They lived side by side, and pagan influences were apparent into the 5th c. as shown by Belayche (2001) which is essential reading in order to understand religious relations in this area.

In Mamre, Jewish, Christian and pagan festivals were celebrated by local people well into the 5th c., as the latter were firmly rooted in local tradition and were difficult to abolish (Kofsky (1998), Fowden (2002)). For more on the Mamre festivals for non-Christians as well as Christians, see 'Ceramics' under 'Pagan Iconography in Art and Material Culture' below. In Gaza, where adherents of Zeus Marnas remained a strong group during the 4th c., and where Porphyry (d. 420) still had to deal with an influential group of non-Christians within the city (Rubin (1998)), paganism was still widely adhered to in the 5th and 6th centuries. Ashkelony and Kofsky (2004) illustrate not only the Christian atmosphere of Gaza during the period, but also the broader cultic context in which it existed, including festivals. The situation in Caesarea, its history, the conversion of a temple there into a church and that church's dismantlement around A.D. 375–425, is described by Holum (2003).

The situation in Palestine, therefore, is not completely dominated by the Jewish presence, but looks remarkably similar to what can be observed elsewhere, albeit within its own regional context: a gradual religious evolution throughout the late antique period with a Hellenistic culture that surpassed religious boundaries. This is also confirmed by Bar (2003), who investigates the Palestinian countryside, and suggests a slow Christianisation during the 5th and 6th centuries. Stroumsa (1989) also stresses the religious *koine* amongst Jews, Christians and non-Christians. Hellenism and pagan cults, however, were especially strong in the coastal areas, where they persisted longer, while in the hinterland their influence was less pronounced. Jerusalem, however, was a special case. As the former religious capital of Judaism, it became an ordinary Greco-Roman town, known as *Aelia Capitolina*, between the end of the second temple period until the creation of the new Christian Jerusalem (Belyache (1999)).

Due to the persistence of the pagan cults in this region, different temples, like those in Baalbek, long remained in use (Westphalen (1999)). Although, at Palmyra, the Allat temple was destroyed by Maternus Cynegius, as discussed by Gassowska (1982). In Palestine and Arabia, Vriezen (1995) observes that churches were not built over pagan sanctuaries immediately. However, he observes that when the theatres were permanently closed, very soon churches were erected in the immediate neighbourhood. Another major contribution to the study of the transformation of the religious landscape in this part of the empire is written by Bayliss (1998).

Syria, General Works: Feldtkeller A. (1994) *Im Reich der Syrischen Göttin. Eine religiös plurale Kultur als Umwelt des frühen Christentums* (Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen 8) (Gütersloh 1994); Foss C. (1997) “Syria in transition, A.D. 550–750: an archaeological approach”, *DOP* 51 (1997) 189–269; Garsoian N., Mathews T. F. and Thomson R. W. (1982) edd. *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington D. C. 1982); Trombley F. R. (1994) “Religious transition in sixth-century Syria”, in *Presence of Byzantium: Studies Presented to Milton V. Anastos in Honor of his Eighty-Fifth Birthday* (Byzantinische Forschungen 20) (Amsterdam 1994) 153–95; Bremmer J. N. (2008) *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 8) (Leiden and Boston 2008).

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Urban Case Studies: *Gaza:* Ashkelony B. and Kofsky A. (2004) *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 3) (Leiden and Boston 2004); Glucker C. A. M. (1987) *The City of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (BAR-IS 325) (Oxford 1987); Van Dam R. (1985) "From paganism to Christianity at late antique Gaza", *Viator* 16 (1985) 1–20. *Caesarea:* Holum K. G. (2003) "The Christianizing of Caesarea Palestinae," in *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung. Symposium vom 14. bis 16. Februar 2000 in halle/Saale*, edd. G. Brands and H. G. Severin (Spätantike-frühes Christentum-Byzanz; Kunst im Ersten Jahrtausend 11) (Wiesbaden 2003) 151–64.

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Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia

The Egyptian countryside was Christianised rather early. The rapidity of this change is believed to have been caused by local factors.

When, through the closure of the temples, the socio-economic system that was connected with them, and which the villages relied upon, disappeared, a vacuum was left behind. Christianity filled the gap, providing an alternative to the temple economy system. Further, it is argued that in Egypt the once powerful link between cult and local culture had, by Late Antiquity, weakened and that the priestly class, who now lived apart from the population, could no longer provide the spiritual succour people needed. Christianity benefited from this and established itself firmly in Egypt during the 3rd and 4th centuries. This change is illustrated by Bagnall (1988) and Hubai (2001)—who emphasises the difference between Christianity and the native religion and how Christianity could have filled the ideological and existential gap—and by Krause (1998). Other important works on religious interaction and conversion are Griggs (1990), who provides a more general overview, while contact between the older ways and the new Christian traditions and their reflection in burial customs is shown by Bowen (2003) in Kellis, and can be found in the papyrological record (Choat 2006). In spite of this Early Christian growth, some older traditions and rites remained active during Late Antiquity, and Hellenistic culture still thrived until the late 5th c. at least (cfr. Krüger (1903)). This was partly due to the fact that holy men, who tended to, literally, demonise paganism, were also contributing unconsciously to the incorporation of older ideas and habits into the Christian religion, as is demonstrated by Frankfurter (2003). An overall introduction to the period is Bagnall (1993). Also, the more recent publications by Bagnall (2007) and Bagnall and Rathbone (2004), which provides an archaeological guide to the sites, are useful key works. An important work on late antique religion in the region is Frankfurter (1998), illustrating the transformation of ancient culture. For a critique on this work, see Smith (2002) (cfr. Panopolis) and Wipszyska (1988). For a remarkable figure in late ancient Egypt, the pagan Horapollon, see Demarsin (this volume) under 'Pagan Writers on Christianity'.

Besides Athens and Antioch, Alexandria also housed an important philosophical school. Unlike Athens, however, the city, housing Jews, pagans and Christians, retained its cosmopolitan status during Late Antiquity. This coexistence often caused some difficulties; Jews allied with pagans against Christians or sometimes with Arians against orthodox Christians as is reported by Haas (1997), who emphasises the interaction between different religious groups and provides a good general overview of the late antique character of the city. A severe

blow for paganism was the destruction of the Serapeum in the city. During the 360s it was already occupied and looted, but the religious tension culminated in 391 when pagans used it as a fortress against the Christians of the city. As a consequence, the Christians destroyed the cult statue as well as the temple, meaning the end of the cult of Serapis in Alexandria. The Isis-Serapis temples in Kanopos suffered the same fate (cfr. Eunapius of Sardis and Rufinus (see Thélamon (1981)). Many scholars believe that Bishop Theophilus was responsible for this act, but this is contested by Russell (2007). It has been suggested that the Daughter Library, which was housed in the Serapeum at one time, may have been destroyed, although Ammianus 22.16.13, writing before the sack notes the library as thing of the past. A recent study on the evolution of the Alexandrine Library has been edited by El-Abbadi and Fathallah (2008).

In the course of the religious unrest, the neo-Platonic school of Alexandria was also closed, symbolised by the death of its famous female teacher Hypatia (*ca.* A.D. 415). Hypatia, who was well-known throughout the empire, taught both pagans and Christians alike. Her sudden death was, as a result, more likely a political act rather than a religious one, as she was trapped in the secular conflict between the Christian imperial Prefect Orestes and the Alexandrian bishop Cyril (Rougé (1990)). Some scholars assume that the death of Hypatia was carried out by monks (Deakin (1996)), who were often known for their aggressive religious behaviour. Another example of this apparent violence by monks comes from Atripe (Panopolis) where a monk named Shenoute, from the White Monastery, is said to have led several violent mobs during the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th c. against pagan targets in this region (cfr. Demarsin (this volume) 'The Actions of Monks'). A study of Shenoute has been completed by Emmel (2002), while Frankfurter (2000) focuses on violence and Christianisation in Panopolis. A comparison between the School of Athens and Alexandria has been made by Watts (2006).

The Isis cult on the Nile island of Philae in Nubia continued for a long time. Only under the reign of Justinian (A.D. 537) was its temple finally closed. Its ability to remain untouched by Christian activity and decrees lay in its diplomatic function, since contact with, and the ability to influence the Nubian tribes could be established through the sanctuary. After its closure the sanctuary was converted into a church dedicated to St. Stephen, as attested by Nautin (1967). Rutherford (1998) focuses on the later history of the temple, while Dijkstra (2008)

serves as a good guide to the current *status quaestionis*. It may well be possible that Isis continued to be worshipped in one form or another during the 6th c. by the Blemmyes, a nomadic Nubian tribe, perhaps up to 567 or later (cfr. also Dijkstra (2004)). Other temples where cultic activity continued for some time, were those of Edfu (Sauneron and Stierlin (1975)) and Karnak. After the edict of Theodosius, within the precinct of Karnak, several Christian sanctuaries as well as monasteries were constructed (Coquin (1972) and more recently Blyth (2006)). In Hermopolis Magna the confrontation and syncretism between Christian and pagan worshippers has been investigated by Baulig (1984). For the study of Nubia in Late Antiquity, Kirwan (2002) is of particular value. An overall picture of the Christianisation of Ethiopia and the presence of paganism there can be found in Brakmann (1994). As is pointed out by Munro-Hay (1991), conversion to Christianity must have taken place rather rapidly in that area in the 4th c.

General Works: Bagnall R. S. (1993) *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993); Bagnall R. S. and Rathbone D. W. (2004) edd. *Egypt from Alexander to the Copts. An Archaeological and Historical Guide* (London 2004); Bagnall R. S. (2007) *Egypt in the Byzantine World 300–700* (Cambridge 2007).

Persistence and Survival of Paganism: Frankfurter D. (1998) *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton 1998); Frankfurter D. (2003) "Syncretism and the holy man in late antique Egypt", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003) 339–85; Krause M. (1998) "Heidentum, Gnosis und Manichäismus, ägyptische Survivals in Ägypten", in *Ägypten in Spätantik-Christlicher Zeit. Einführung in die koptische Kultur*, ed. M. Krause (Wiesbaden 1998) 81–116; Vinzent M. (1998) "Das "heidnische" Ägypten im 5. Jahrhundert", in *Heiden und Christen im 5. Jahrhundert*, edd. J. van Oort and D. Wyrwa (Studien der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft 5) (Leuven 1998) 32–65; Maspero J. (1914) "Horapollon et la fin du paganisme Egyptien", *BIFAO* 11 (1914) 163–95; *Isis and Serapis*: see Demarsin (this volume): 'The Mystery Cults'.

Religious Encounters: Bagnall R. (1988) "Combat ou vide: christianisme et paganisme dans l'Égypte romaine tardive", *Ktema* 13 (1988) 285–96; Bowen G. E. (2003) "Some observations on Christian burial practices at Kellis", in *The Oasis Papers III. Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project*, edd. G. E. Bowen and C. A. Hope (2003) 167–82; Choat M. (2006) *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (Studia Antiqua Australiensia 1) (Turnhout 2006); Friedman F. D. (1989) ed. *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts, 2nd–7th Centuries A.D.* (Providence, Rhode Island 1989); Griggs C. W. (1990) *Early Egyptian Christianity. From its Origins to 451 C.E.* (Leiden 1990); Hubai P. (2001) "Über die Ursachen des Sieges des Christentums in Ägypten", *Numen* 48 (2001) 81–116; Rees B. R. (1950) "Popular religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt II: the transition to Christianity", *JEA* 36 (1950) 86–100; Willers D. *et al.* (1993) *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten* (Riggisberger Berichte A) (Riggisberg 1993); Wipszycka E. (1988) "La Christianisation de l'Égypte aux

IV^e–VI^e siècles. Aspects sociaux et ethniques”, *Aegyptus* 68 (1988) 117–65. *Pagan Remnants in Christianity*: Hammerschmidt E. (1957) “Altägyptische Elemente im koptischen Christentum”, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 6 (1957) 233–50. *Severus of Antioch*: Krüger M. A. (1903) ed. *Zacharie le Scholastique, vie de Sévère* (Patrologia Orientalis 2.1) (Paris 1903) 7–115.

Alexandria: General: Haas C. (1997) *Alexandria in Late Antiquity. Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore and London 1997); Thelamon F. (1981) *Païens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle. L’apport de “l’histoire ecclésiastique” de Rufin d’Aquilée* (Paris 1981); Watts E. J. (2006) *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 41) (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2006). *Theophilus and the Serapeum*: Russell N. (2007) *Theophilus of Alexandria* (The Early Church Fathers) (London and New York 2007). *The Library*: El-Abbadi M. and Fathallah O. (2008) edd. *What Happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?* (Library of the Written Word 3) (Leiden and Boston 2008). *Alexandria and Hypatia*: Cameron A. and Long J. (1993) *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford 1993) esp. 39–62; Deakin M. A. B. (2007) *Hypatia of Alexandria: Mathematician and Martyr* (Amherst, New York 2007); Dzielska M. (1995) *Hypatia of Alexandria* (Cambridge, Mass. 1995); Rist J. M. (1965) “Hypatia”, *Phoenix* 19 (1965) 214–25; Rougé J. (1990) “La politique de Cyrille d’Alexandrie et le meurtre d’Hypathie”, *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990) 485–504.

Shenoute and Panopolis: see Demarsin (this volume): ‘The Actions of Monks’; Emmel S. L. (2002) “From the other side of the Nile: Shenute and Panopolis”, in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, edd. A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs and J. Van der Vliet (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 31) (Leiden, Boston and Cologne 2002) 95–113; Frankfurter D. (2000) “‘Things unbefitting Christians’: violence and Christianization in fifth-century Panopolis”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000) 273–95; Smith M. (2002) “Aspects of the preservation and transmission of indigenous and religious traditions in Akhmim and its environs during the Graeco-Roman period”, in *Perspectives on Panopolis. An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, edd. A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs and J. Van der Vliet (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 31) (Leiden, Boston and Cologne 2002) 233–47.

Philae: Dijkstra J. H. F. (2004) “A cult of Isis at Philae after Justinian? Reconsidering *P.Cair.Masp. I 67004*”, *ΣPE* 146 (2004) 137–54; Dijkstra J. H. F. (2008) *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion. A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298–642 CE)* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 173) (Leuven 2008). Nautin P. (1967) “La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne”, *CahArch* 17 (1967) 1–43; Rutherford I. (1998) “Island of the extremity: space, language, and power in the pilgrimage traditions of Philae”, in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. D. Frankfurter (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 134) (Leiden, Boston and Cologne 1998) 229–56.

Other Areas: Philae and Edfu: Sauneron S. and Stierlin. H. (1975) *Die letzten Tempel Ägyptens. Edfu und Philae* (Paris 1975). *Karnak*: Blyth E. (2006) *Karnak. Evolution of a Temple* (London and New York 2006); Coquin R.-G. (1972) “La Christianisation des temples de Karnak”, *BIFAO* 72 (1972) 169–78. *Hermopolis Magna*: Baulig H. (1984) *Das frühe Christentum in Hermopolis Magna. Beiträge zur*

Geschichte des christlichen Ägypten (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Trier). *Nubia*: Fastunati E. (1993) "I Blemmi in bassa Nubia: la fine del paganesimo e i primordi dell' evangelizzazione (The Blemmyes in low Nubia: the end of paganism and the beginnings of evangelization)", *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 59.2 (1993) 209–24; Kirwan L. (2002) *Studies on the History of Late Antique and Christian Nubia* (Variorum C.S. 748) (Aldershot and Burlington, Vermont 2002). *Ethiopia*: Brakmann H. (1994) *To para tois barbarois ergon theion. Die Einwurzelung der Kirche im spätantiken Reich von Aksum* (Bonn 1994); Munro-Hay S. (1991) *Aksum. An African Civilization of Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh 1991).

Africa

In Africa, Christianity was an urban religion. Initially, it was found mainly in coastal towns and cities, whereas in the remote hinterland the local African cults persisted longer, and during the 5th c. pagan religious activity can still be attested there. The importance of Saturn and his cult was high in Africa, and unlike in Europe his cult bore several characteristics in common with Christianity, which meant the latter was more easily accepted in this part of the empire. On African Saturn, see Leglay (1966). On the other hand, during the 4th c. temples were still built in Ghirzah (Tripolitana, Libya) and the city remained a centre of non-Christian cult well into the 6th c. and maybe longer (Brogan (1984)). Also, even within the Christianised parts of Africa, older practices continued to take place within the realm of public civic activities; Augustine condemns spectacles in the theatre and the stadium, for example. Similarly, a transformed form of the ruler cult survived until late in Roman Africa (see Demarsin (this volume) 'Imperial Cult') and in Carthage.

At Sétif, temples were maintained until a late date (Mattingly and Hitchner (1995)). Most temples, however, were abandoned and then adapted or torn down during the 4th c. For what happened at Mactar, see Picard (1984 and 1988). For the study of Late Roman urbanism in Africa, see Sears' (2007) recent volume. A general article on temple conversion is Teichner (1996) and also Duval (1971), who concentrates on the Christianisation of Sbeitla. Julian's actions in Roman Africa are discussed by Dietz (2000). A recent general study of Roman Africa up to Late Antiquity, which includes some brief comments on pagan ideas of the afterlife, is Le Bohec (2005); Lepelley (1979) is somewhat older, but more focused on our period, and therefore remains advisable reading. Volume 1 (chapter 7) focuses on paganism, its struggle with Christianity and its end, and volume 2 surveys the centres of population in North Africa and their history. A general introduction

to African religion throughout the 'High Empire' up to Constantine is Rives (1995), while, for the Late Empire, see Riggs (2001), who reports on the continuous presence of paganism and how the gods remained important during the 5th c. Leppelley (1987) focuses on the maintenance of local traditional practices around the time of Augustine, and how he reacted against them.

General Works: Corbier P. and Griesheimer M. (2005) *L'Afrique romaine. 146 av. J.-C.-439 ap. J.-C.* (Paris 2005); Lepelley C. (1979) *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire*, 2 vols. (Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 80) (Paris 1979); Le Bohec Y. (2005) *Histoire de l'Afrique romaine. (146 avant J.-C.-439 après J.-C.)* (Antiquité/Synthèses 9) (Paris 2005); Mattingly D. J. and Hitchner R. B. (1995) "Roman Africa: an archaeological review", *JRS* 85 (1995) 165–213; Rives J. B. (1995) *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford 1995); Sears G. (2007) *Late Roman African Urbanism: Continuity and Transformation in the City* (BAR-IS 1693) (Oxford 2007).

Persistence and Survival of Paganism: Leglay M. (1956) *Les religions orientales dans l'Afrique ancienne d'après les collections du Musée Stéphane Gsell, Alger* (Algiers 1956); Lepelley C. (1987) "Formes païennes de sociabilité en Afrique au temps de saint Augustin", in *Sociabilité, pouvoirs et société. Actes du colloque de Rouen 24/26 novembre 1983*, ed. F. Thélamon (Rouen 1987) 99–103; Riggs D. (2001) "The continuity of paganism between the cities and countryside of Late Roman Africa", in *Urban Centers and Rural Contexts in Late Antiquity*, edd. T. S. Burns and J. W. Eadie (East Lansing, Michigan 2001) 285–300.

Specific cults: *Saturn:* Leglay M. (1966) *Saturne africain: histoire* (BEFAR 205) (Paris 1966). *Ghırza:* Brogan S. (1984) *Ghırza: A Libyan Settlement in the Roman Period* (Tripoli 1984). *Emperor Cult:* see Demarsin (this volume): 'Imperial Cult'.

Temples: Duval N. (1971) "Église et temple en Afrique du Nord. Note sur les installations chrétiennes dans les temples à cour, à propos de l'église dite de Servius à Sbeitla", *BAC* N.S. 7 (1971) 265–96; Goodchild R. G. and Reynolds J. M. (1958) "The temple of Zeus at Cyrene", *BSR* 13 (1958) 30–62; Picard G. C. (1984) "Le temple du musée à Mactar", *RA* N.S. 1 (1984) 13–28; Picard G. C. (1988) "Essai d'interprétation du sanctuaire de Hoter Miskar à Mactar", *BAC* N.S. 18 (1988) 17–20; Teichner F. (1996) "Signa venerandae Christianae religionis: on the conversion of pagan sanctuaries in the dioceses of Africa and Aegyptus", *LibSt* 27 (1996) 53–66.

PAGAN ICONOGRAPHY IN ART AND MATERIAL CULTURE

General

Just as late antique writing informs us about how people thought and perceived the world around them, art and symbols can be equally informative. Within art and iconography the coming of Christianity did not cause a sudden demise in non-Christian imagery. Themes and

models were rearranged during Late Antiquity so that they constituted a new iconographical language for Christians, Jews and non-Christians alike (cfr *infra*, 'Syncretism, Shift or Survival?'). A first, well-illustrated, introduction to late antique art, with a wide range of topics is Bauer and Zimmermann (2001). For the transformation of art and its function see Elsner (1995), and for a more recent study on late antique art, consult Kitzinger (2003). For Egypt, Török (2005) provides a general overview and is an important work, with subjects ranging from polytheism and confrontation, to myths, surviving pharaonic motifs, and the evolution of art.

Transformation of Art: Bauer F. A. and Zimmermann N. (2001) edd. *Epochenwandel? Kunst und Kultur zwischen Antike und Mittelalter* (Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie) (Mainz 2001); Elsner J. (2000) "From the culture of spolia to the cult of relics: the Arch of Constantine and the genesis of late antique forms", *BSR* 68 (2000) 149–84; Elsner J. (1995) *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*. (Cambridge 1995); Kitzinger E. (2003) *Studies in Late Antique, Byzantine and Medieval Western Art* (London 2003); Pindar M. S. (2001) "Eine Kultur zwischen Veränderung und Stagnation. Zum Umgang mit den Mythenbildern im spätantiken Haus", in *Epochenwandel? Kunst und Kultur zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, edd. F. A. Bauer and N. Zimmermann (Mainz 2001) 95–118.

Regional Studies: Weitzmann K. (1981) *Classical Heritage in Byzantine and Near Eastern Art* (Variorum Collected Studies 140) (London 1981). Török L. (2005) *Transfigurations of Hellenism. Aspects of Late Antique Art in Egypt A.D. 250–700* (Probleme der Ägyptologie 23) (Leiden and Boston 2005).

Influences on Early Christian Iconography and Christian Attitudes towards Ancient Art

Christianity grew steadily within a society that relied a great deal on the importance of images and the visual arts. Hence, Christian iconography, during its development, borrowed a lot from the Greco-Roman palette. As such, it was not because of a Christian prohibition of images that a definably Christian iconography is absent during its first centuries, but because early Christians were, just like all the other citizens within the empire, using the iconography they were already acquainted with. The iconography from, for example, the Roman catacombs, illustrates the evolution from a 'Roman' to a definitive 'Christian' iconography very well. Engemann (2007) illustrates the vividness of non-Christian iconography and its role in Late Antiquity, while Elsner (1998), in chapter 8, describes the formation of Christian art. Murray (1981) illustrates the evolution of older pagan motifs, especially Orpheus and Helios, into a new Christian setting.

Weitzmann (1960) believes that mythological scenes in Early Christian art were rare, yet their importance in the formation of Early Christian iconography is very significant. However, Christians sometimes destroyed pagan statues that were left in cities and in the countryside. These acts resulted in some imperial laws stressing the artistic, historical and cultural importance of these works, so that these images should be preserved not out of pious reasons, but for the sake of the art itself and for the importance they had for the history and appearance of ancient cities. On Christian tolerance towards classical imagery, see Lavagne (2000). A general overview of classical art and its symbols persisting through into late antique culture can be found in Brilliant (1979) and in Liebeschuetz (1995) who illustrates the situation in, and the differences between, the eastern and western empire.

Ancient Iconography as the Basis for Christian Iconography: Bisconti F. (2000) "Le iconografie", in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 361–67; Brenk B. (1977) *Spätantike und frühes Christentum* (Frankfurt 1977); Elsner J. (1998) *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph. The Art of the Roman Empire A.D. 100–450* (Oxford and New York 1998); Engemann J. (2007) "Nichtchristliche und Christliche Ikonographie", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 281–94; Gough M. (1973) *The Origins of Christian Art* (London 1973); Grabar A. (1968) *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins* (Bollingen Series 35.10) (Princeton 1968); Grabar A. (1979) *Les voies de la création en iconographie chrétienne. Antiquité et Moyen Âge* (Paris 1979); Mathews T. F. (1993) *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton 1993); Murray C. (1981) *Rebirth and Afterlife. A Study of the Transmutation of Some Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Funerary Art* (BAR-IS 100) (Oxford 1981); Weitzmann K. (1979) ed. *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, through February 12, 1978* (New York 1977); Weitzmann K. (1960) "The survival of mythological representations in Early Christian and Byzantine art and their impact on Christian iconography", *DOP* 14 (1960) 45–68.

Coptic Art: Badawy A. (1949) *L'art copte. Les influences égyptiennes* (Cairo 1949); Iacobini A. (2000) *Visioni dipinte: immagini della contemplazione negli affreschi di Bawīt* (Rome 2000); Laferrière P.-H. (2008) *La Bible murale dans les sanctuaires coptes* (Cairo 2008); Langener L. (1996) *Isis lactans—Maria lactans: Untersuchungen zur koptischen Ikonographie* (Altenberge 1996).

Christian Tolerance toward Classical Images: Bowersock G. W. (1990) *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1990); Lavagne H. (2000) "La tolérance de l'église et de l'état: à l'égard des oeuvres d'art du paganisme dans l'Antiquité tardive", in *Etudes Littéraires* 32 (2000) 45–54. Lepelley C. (2010) "The use of secularised Latin pagan culture by Christians", in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, edd. D. Gwynn and S. Bangert (Late Antique Archaeology 6) (Boston and Leiden 2010) 477–92.

Persistence of Classical Forms in Iconography: Brilliant R. (1979) "Mythology", in *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, ed. K. Weitzmann (New York 1979) 126–98.

Syncretism—Shift or Survival?

Older non-Christian material and symbols also became reinterpreted according to the new Christian paradigms. For example, as attested by Eusebius, in Constantinople a statue of a *criophor*, a boy carrying a sheep, was erected, which carried a particular significance for Christians as the 'Good Shepherd' but which was not recognised as such by pagans, who, of course, saw it with its original idyllic meaning. Similarly, Orpheus, Ulysses and Sol were associated with Christ, and Hercules was also compared with him (see examples of imagery in the via Latina catacomb (see Demarsin (this volume) 'Burial') and Huskinson (1974)). Recently, Herrero (2007) looked at the links between the cult of Orpheus and Christianity. Von Haeling (2005) investigates the relationship between Greek mythology and early Christianity in general. Mathews (1993), reinterprets the image of Christ that developed in Late Antiquity as that of an ancient god or philosopher, rather than as a form of the emperor, and this work is important in the discussion as to how the iconography of Christ developed. A more recent work on the pagan 'prototypes' of the Christ image is Andaloro (2000). Other biblical and Christian personalities became associated with pagan gods and heroes; Tyche and Victoria, were replaced by Mary, for example. This gradual evolution seems to have occurred first in literature, before it became visible in iconography (Pentcheva (2006)).

Symbols also transformed and changed meaning, such as the staurogram-Christ monogram (Black (1970)), and for the evolution of the Egyptian symbol of life see Cramer (1955). Statistics on the survival of ancient pagan iconography and symbols within Early Christian art, and of the appearance of neutral iconography, are assembled by Provoost (2004). Another contributing factor to the survival of ancient iconography in another guise was the fact that in many areas new Christian practices were often expressed in local forms and familiar iconography. Within ancient magic also, Christian and non-Christian motifs became intermingled, as is illustrated by Sfameni (2001). The fashion for classical forms was another major reason why ancient imagery survived. This phenomenon, particularly apparent during the 4th and 5th centuries, rearranged the late antique iconography and

altered its original meaning. As a consequence, imagery previously regarded as religious was now detached from such connotations, in order to be accessible to Christians and pagans alike. Therefore it is no surprise that Bacchic scenes are frequently found in late antique iconography, as they refer, just like hunting scenes, to the ideals of a luxurious and pleasant life, rather than an evocation or veneration of the god Bacchus. As such, this imagery can barely be defined as ‘pagan’ anymore. On Dionysus and his relationship to Christianity, see Seaford (2006) and Bowersock (2000), and on the ‘feast’ in Late Antiquity and its connection with Dionysiac iconography, see Parish (1995).

General Works: Haehling von R. (2005) ed. *Griechische Mythologie und frühes Christentum* (Darmstadt 2005); Huskinson J. (1974) “Some pagan mythological figures and their significance in Early Christian art”, *BSR* 47 (1974) 68–97; Kitzinger E. (1963) “The Hellenistic heritage in Byzantine art”, *DOP* 17 (1963) 96–115; Provoost A. (2004) “The apostolic world of thought in Early Christian iconography”, in *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought*, ed. A. Hilhorst (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 70) (Leiden and Boston 2004) 158–93; Smith M. (2002) “Aspects of the preservation and transmission of indigenous religious traditions in Akhmin and its environs during the Graeco-Roman Period”, in *Perspectives on Panopolis. An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, edd. A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs and J. Van Der Vliet (Leiden, Boston and New York 2002) 233–47.

Architecture, Iconography and the Elite: Uytterhoeven I. (2007) “Housing in Late Antiquity: thematic perspectives”, in *Housing in Late Antiquity. From Palaces to Shops*, edd. L. Lavan, L. Özengel and A. Sarantis (Late Antique Archaeology 3.2) (Leiden and Boston 2007) 25–66.

Syncretism: General: Sfameni C. (2001) “Magic syncretism in Late Antiquity. Some examples from papyri and magical gems”, *Ilu, Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones* 6 (2001) 183–99. Regional: Arnold C. E. (1995) *The Colossian Syncretism. The Interface Between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.77) (Tübingen 1995); Caputto G. (1977) “Sincretismo religioso ed espressione figurative in Tripolitania”, *QAL* 9 (1977) 119–24; Feldtkeller A. (1994) *Im Reich der Syrischen Göttin. Eine religiös plurale Kultur als Umwelt des frühen Christentums*. (Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen 8) (Gütersloh 1994); Frankfurter D. (2003) “Syncretism and the holy man in late antique Egypt”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003) 339–85.

Pagan Motifs: Dionysus: Bowersock G. W. (2000) “Dionysos as an epic hero”, in *Selected Papers on Late Antiquity* (Bari 2000) 109–20; Chuvín P. and Will E. (1991) *Mythologie et géographie Dionysiaques. Recherches sur l'oeuvre de Nonnos De Panopolis* (Clermont-Ferrand 1991); Kerényi C. (1996) *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life* (Bollingen Series 65.2) (Princeton 1996); Parrish D. (1995) “A mythological theme in the decoration of Late Roman dining rooms: Dionysos and his circle”, *RA* (1995) 307–32; Seaford R. (2006) *Dionysos* (London 2006); Turcan R. (1966) *Les sarcophages romains à représentations dionysiaques. Essai de chronologie et d'histoire religieuse* (BEFAR 210) (Paris 1966).

Orpheus: Herrero de Jáuregui M. (2007) *Tradición òrfica y cristianismo antiguo* (Colección Estructuras y Procesos. Serie Religion) (Madrid 2007). *Hercules*: La Rocca E. (2000) "Le basiliche cristiane 'a deambulatorio' e la sopravvivenza del culto eroico", in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città Cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 204–20; see Demarsin (this volume): 'Burial' and 'Funerary Art and Epigraphy', below.

Symbols: Provoost A. (1976) *Iconologisch onderzoek van de laat-antieke herdersvoorstellingen* (Leuven 1976); Black M. (1970) "The chi-rho sign - Christogram and/or Staurogram?", in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, edd. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (Exeter 1970) 319–27; Cramer M. (1955) *Das altägyptische Lebenszeichen in christlichen (koptischen) Ägypten* (Wiesbaden 1955); O'Connor T. (1894) *The Image of a Cross in Pagan, Christian and Anti-Christian Symbolism* (Dublin and London 1894).

Representations of People: *Warrior Saints*: Walter C. (2003) *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot 2003). *Orans-pietas*: Bisconti F. (2000) "Il gesto dell' orante tra atteggiamento e personificazione", in *Roma Aurea. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 368–72. *Christ*: Andaloro M. (2000) "I prototipi pagani e l'archetipo del volto di Cristo", in *Roma Aurea. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 413–24; Mathews T. F. (1993) *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton 1993). *Virgin Mary*: Pentcheva B. V. (2006) *Icons and Power: the Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, Penn. 2006). See also Demarsin (this volume): 'The Mystery Cults', esp. Cybele, Isis and Serapis.

Funerary Art and Epigraphy

The evolution of late antique art can be easily followed within the field of funerary art, for instance in the necropolis under St. Peter's basilica in Rome, which illustrates the survival of older iconography (bucolic, mythological) and epigraphic devices (*benemerens*, *dis manibus*) from the 2nd to the 4th centuries. Within the catacomb paintings, the survival of classical themes can be distinguished for longer, evolving initially from symbolic and realistic models towards more idealised scenes. On the transformation of pagan iconography into new Christian settings in funerary art, see Murray (1981). It is interesting that leisure activities (lion hunting, drinking, etc.) appear far more often on sarcophagi than on wall paintings from the catacombs. This may be due to the fact that sarcophagi were intended for display to an elite audience, both Christian and non-Christian alike, who liked to express the luxurious life they lived (see mosaics, ceramics and glass below) within a funerary context, while catacomb art was produced specifically for deceased Christians, searching for, at first, existing types to express a faith that focused on the afterlife.

Concerning Dionysiac sarcophagi, Turcan (1966) points out that they were very popular during the 4th c. For Hercules' twelve labours on sarcophagi, see Jongste (1992). Hercules was also frequently depicted in the via Latina cemetery. The preservation of the paintings within this underground burial complex (and also in the via Dino Compagni cemetery) is so good that it has produced a lot of scholarly research. Biblical scenes (Samson, Jonah, Abraham, etc.) are found together with very explicit pagan scenes (Alcestis, Hercules, personifications of Annona, etc). The scenes are mostly dated from the second half of the 4th c. Why there should be so many Christian and pagan scenes within the same complex in this late period seems puzzling, but it may be precisely this late date that might make this dichotomy possible. If we look at the Calendar of 354 (see 'Festivals' in Demarsin (this volume)), the complex at the Porta Marina, but also the late sarcophagi and 4th and 5th c. mosaics with Bacchic and hunting scenes, it becomes obvious that the iconographic repertoire from the via Latina catacomb is typical of the period, because it represents a late antique rearrangement of classical themes expressing more the social status of the owners (a learning scene/a philosopher), rather than their religious preference. These pagan scenes should not be seen as religious, but cultural. The tight bond between Christian, Hellenistic and Egyptian funerary art and the coexistence in material expression between Christians and non-Christians, is described by Thomas (2000).

General Works: Barbet A. (2001) ed. *La peinture funéraire antique: IV^e siècle av. J.-C.-IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.* Actes du VI^e Colloque de l'Association internationale pour la peinture murale antique (AIPMA), 6–10 octobre 1998, Saint-Romain-en-Gal, Vienne (Paris 2001); Murray C. (1981) *Rebirth and Afterlife. A Study of the Transmutation of Some Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Funerary Art* (BAR-IS 100) (Oxford 1981).

Sarcophagi: Bovini G. and Brandenburg H. (1967) *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage I* (Wiesbaden 1967); Jongste P. F. B. (1992) *The Twelve Labors of Hercules on Roman Sarcophagi* (Studia Archaeologica 59) (Rome 1992); Provoost A. (2007) *Chronologisch repertorium van de vroegchristelijke sarcophagen uit Rome en Ostia* (Leuven 2007); Turcan R. (1966) *Les Sarcophages romains à représentations dionysiaques. Essai de chronologie et d'histoire religieuse* (BEFAR 210) (Paris 1966).

Regional Studies: Egypt: Thomas T. K. (2000) *Late Antique Egyptian Funerary Sculpture: Images for this World and the Next* (Princeton 2000). **Israel:** Michaeli T. (1996) "Family Burial in Late Antique and Early Christian Paintings in Eretz Israel", *Assaf: Studies in Art History* 2 (1996) 27–48. **Rome:** Ghetti A. et al. (1951) *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano eseguite negli anni 1940–1949* (Vatican City 1951); cfr. Gwynn D. (2011) "The 'end' of senatorial paganism", in this volume; Malbon E. S. (1990) *The Iconography of the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus* (Princeton 1990); Mielsch H. and von Hesberg H. (1986) *Die*

Heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom. Die Mausoleen A-D (Memorie 16.1. Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia) (Rome 1986); Mielsch H. and von Hesberg, H. (1995) *Die Heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom. Die Mausoleen E-I und Z-PSI*. (Memorie 16.2. Atti della Pontificia accademia romana di archeologia) (Rome 1995); Perler O. (1953) *Die Mozaiken der Juliergruft im Vatikan* (Freiburger Universitätsreden, N.S. 16) (Fribourg, Switz. 1963); Prandi A. (1957) *La zona archaeologica della confessio Vaticana. I monumenti del II secolo* (Vatican City 1957); Zander P. (2002) *La necropolis Vaticana*. (Roma Sacra 25. Guida alle Chiese della Città Eterna) (Rome and Naples 2002); Bargebuhr F. P. (1991) *The Paintings of the ‘New’ Catacomb of the Via Latina and the Struggle of Christianity against Paganism* (Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1991–1992) (Heidelberg 1991); Berg B. (1994) “Alcestis and Hercules in the catacomb of via Latina”, *VigChr* 48 (1994) 219–34; Ferrua A. (1960) *Le pitture della nuova catacomba di via Latina* (Monumenti di Antichità Cristiana 2.8) (Vatican City 1960); Ferrua A. (1991) *The Unknown Catacomb. A Unique discovery of Early Christian Art* (New Lanark 1991); Kötsche-Breitenburch L. (1976) *Die neue Katakomben an der Via Latina in Rom. Untersuchung zu Ikonographie der alte Wandmalereien* (JAC Ergänzungsband 4) (Münster 1976); Tronzo W. (1986) *The Via Latina Catacomb. Imitation and Discontinuity in 4th Century Roman Painting* (Monographs on the Fine Arts 28) (London 1986).

Epigraphy, Text and Illumination

Within the field of funerary epigraphy, older types continued (e.g. *benemerens*), even if they originally carried a pagan significance, such as *D.M.* (= *Dis Manibus*) and many examples of this come from the Roman catacombs (Mazzoleni (2002)). At the same time, funerary inscriptions occasionally attest to the continuing existence of pagan communities, for example in Aphrodisias (Roueché (1989)), or the adaptation of a group of Christians to local customs (e.g. “Christians for Christians” inscriptions and the influence of the Phrygian religion on the Montanists). Also, we see Christian subject matter in book illumination that was carried out using contemporary motifs and styles, as is illustrated by the introductory work of Weitzmann (1977).

Epigraphy: Roueché C. (1989) *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity. The Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions Including Texts from the Excavations at Aphrodisias Conducted by Kenan T. Erim*. (JRS Monographs 5) (London 1989). Evolution: Mazzoleni D. (2002) “Inscriptions in Roman catacombs”, in *The Christian Catacombs of Rome. History, Decoration, Inscriptions*, edd. V. Fiocchi Nicolai, F. Bisconti and D. Mazzoleni (Regensburg 2002) 147–85.

Book Illumination: Henig M. (1979) “Late antique book illustration and the Gallic prefecture”, in *De Rebus Bellicis: Papers Presented to Prof. E. A. Thompson*

(BAR-IS 63) 17–28; Nordenfalk C. (1970) *Die spätantiken Zierbuchstaben* (Stockholm 1970); Weitzmann K. (1977) *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination* (New York 1977).

Metal, Gold and Glass

The decoration found on ancient gold and silver wares is often composed of hunting or Bacchic scenes, but also other images that reflect the classical and educated way of life (myths, gladiator games, etc.). Banquets and ritualised ceremonies played an important part in the lives of the late antique elite who were eager to show their sophistication, while at the same time gold and silverware were the most common form of imperial donation to the elite. As a consequence, precious wares played an important part in late antique elite culture, and from this period, fortunately, a large amount of highly decorated silver and gold material survives, usually in the form of hoards, for example from Kaisersaugst from the mid 4th c. (Cahn and Kaufmann (1984); Guggisberg and Kaufmann-Heinimann (2003)).

A short introduction to the evolution of gold and silverware is provided by Johns (2007). More general remarks on the function of silver plates, their development throughout Late Antiquity within imperial, domestic and religious contexts and their iconography, are made by Leader-Newby (2004). For a discussion of the function and value of Roman silver plates, see Johns (1990) but also Painter (1993) in discussion with Cameron (1992). Besides the insight they give to the elite way of life, some assemblages can illustrate religious changes in elite culture during Late Antiquity, as can be seen with the Esquiline Treasure (Painter 2000). Large glass plates can be seen in the same way as gold and silverware as their use, function and decoration are the same. Their decoration depicts both Christian and pagan themes, such as Venus, Dionysus and Pan (Goethert 2007).

General Works: Cameron A. (1992) “Observations on the distribution and ownership of Late Roman silver plate”, *JRA* 5 (1992) 178–85; Johns C. (1990) “Research on Roman silver plate”, *JRA* 3 (1990) 28–43; Johns C. (2007) “Geräte aus Gold und Silber”, in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 356–67; Leader-Newby R. (2004) *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity. Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot 2004); Painter K. (1993) “Late Roman silver plate: a reply to Alan Cameron”, *JRA* 6 (1993) 109–15.

Specific Treasures: Cahn H. A. and Kaufmann-Heinimann A. (1984) *Der spättrömische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst*, 2 vols. (Basler Beiträge zur Ur und Frühgeschichte 9) (Derendingen 1984); Guggisberg M. A. and Kaufmann-Heinimann A. (2003) edd. *Der spättrömische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst, die neuen Funde: Silber im Spannungsfeld von Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft der Spätantike* (Forschungen in Augst 34) (Augst 2003); Mango M. M. (1986) *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Kōraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore 1986); Mango M. M. and Bennett A. (1994) *The Sevso Treasure. Part 1: Art Historical Description and Inscriptions* (JRA Supplementary Series 12.1) (Ann Arbor 1994); Painter K. (2000) "Il tesoro dell' Esquilino", in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 140–46.

Glass: Goethert K. (2007) "Trierer Glasproduktion", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 386–95; Paolucci F. (2002) *L'arte del vetro inciso a Roma nel IV secolo d. C.* (Florence 2002); Paolucci F. (1997) *I vetri incisi dall'Italia settentrionale e dalla Rezia: nel periodo medio e tardo imperiale* (Florence 1997).

Textile

Since textile does not easily survive, the provenance of the majority of existing late antique textiles is Egyptian. Within these, classical motifs can still be discerned. Friedländer's work (1945) is rather old, but his study is still useful for the different examples with pagan iconography he has gathered. For a review of his work, see Hanfmann (1946). For more recent scholarly research, see Linscheid (2001), Muthesius and Kislinger (1997) and Staufer (1995), who present overviews of weaving and tapestries from the Roman East and beyond. Pagan motifs on textile are studied by Merz (2000), while McNally (2002) discusses the appearance of both Christian and pagan imagery on the 'Mary Silk', which represents scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary together with depictions of Dionysus.

General: Linscheid P. (2001) "Late antique to Early Islamic textiles from Egypt", *Textile History* 32 (Berlin 2001) 75–80; Muthesius A. and Kislinger E. (1997) *Byzantine Silk Weaving: A.D. 400 to A.D. 1200* (Vienna 1997); Staufer A. (1995) *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York, 1995); *Tissus et vêtements dans l'Antiquité tardive: actes du colloque de l'association pour l'Antiquité tardive, Lyon, musée historique des Tissus, 18–19 janvier 2003* (Antiquité Tardive 12) (Turnhout 2004).

Pagan Motifs: Friedländer P. et al. (1945) *Documents of Dying Paganism: Textiles of Late Antiquity in Washington, New York, and Leningrad* (Berkeley 1945); Hanfmann M. A. (1946) Review of Friedländer, *Documents in Dying Paganism* in *Speculum* 21 (1946) 255–58; Merz S. (2000) "Exkurs: Andromeda und das Ketos", in *Textilien aus Ägypten 1. Textilien aus dem Vorbesitz von Theodor Graf, Carl Schmidt und dem Ägyptischen Museum Berlin*, edd. C. Fluck, P. Linscheid and

S. Merz (Spätantike-Frühes Christentum-Byzanz. Kunst im Ersten Jahrtausend A. Grundlängen und Monumente 1.1) (Wiesbaden 2000) 27–30.

Syncretism: McNally S. (2002) “Syncretism in Panopolis? The evidence of the “Mary Silk” in the Abegg Stiftung”, in *Perspectives on Panopolis. An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, edd. A. Egberts *et al.* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 31) (Leiden, Boston and Cologne 2002) 145–64.

Mosaics and Opus Sectile

In the eastern part of the empire, pagan imagery appears on mosaics up to the 8th c. when this is finally stopped by the new Islamic rulers in the area. Bowersock (2006), which is a good up to date introduction to the topic, gives ample proof of this shared Hellenism between pagans and Christians throughout the East, especially in Jordan, but also in Palestine, during Late Antiquity. The volume by Dunbabin (1978) on Roman Africa remains of particular interest for the understanding of the transition from classical to Late Roman art, for example how classical scenes were superseded by scenes reflecting the life of the particular patron of the work, and how deities such as Venus and Dionysus were often depicted due to their association with love and drinking and feasting. See also Blake (1940) and Oakeshott (1967) for pagan and Hellenistic motifs from late antique Rome. Balty (1972 a and b), (1977) and (1995) extensively studied the mosaics of the East, with a special focus on Antioch and Apamea. For the mosaic in the Church of St. Stephen at Umm er-Rasas, see Piccirillo and Alliata (1994). Downey (1945) illustrates two mosaics from Antioch with representations of Megalopsychia (greatness of soul). The mosaics of Apamea from the 4th c. represent the philosophical and cultural life of that period (Balty (1995)).

For the Tunisian mosaics, Ben Abed Ben Khader (2006) concludes that it would be misleading to split them up into categories of Christian, Judaic or Islamic art. Culture was expressed in mosaics in the West as well, as can be seen on the mosaic of the Muses from Trier (Hupe (2007)), while theatrical scenes remained remarkably popular and pagan motifs still appeared. Hellenistic villa mosaics from Britain have been published by Scott (2004). Other adaptations and survivals of classical iconography were visible in 4th c. Spain (Lancha 2003), in the mosaic of Santa Sabina in Rome, with gods reclining next to the river bed, and from the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris. This mosaic, but also the mosaic from the house of Dionysus at Sepphoris, have been treated by Talgam and Weiss (2002) and (2004) and by Kuhnel (2000).

For the Dionysiac repertoire from the end of the 3rd to the middle of the 4th c., see Campbell (1988). The role which Orpheus played in mosaic iconography in Late Antiquity is discussed by Jesnick (1997). As well as mosaics, the author also considers the broader figure of Orpheus in Antiquity, his relations with the other gods and with Christ, but also in media other than mosaics. A thorough examination of late antique mosaics is carried out by Scott (2000) who sheds some light on the significance of the pagan iconography.

Regional Studies, the West: Britain: Scott S. (2000) *Art and Society in Fourth-Century Britain: Villa Mosaics in Context* (Oxford 2000); Black E. W. (1986) "Christian and pagan hopes of salvation in Romano-British mosaics", in *Pagan Gods and Shrines of the Roman Empire*, edd. M. Henig, and A. King (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 8) (Oxford 1986) 147–58. Trier: Hupe J. (2007) "Mosaiken aus der spätantiken Blütezeit Triers", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 404–15. The Iberian Peninsula: Lancha J. (2003) "Mythologie classique et mosaïques tardives d'Hispanie (IVe s.)", in *L'Afrique vandale et byzantine 2*, edd. N. Duval et al. (Antiquité Tardive 11) (Turnhout 2003) 197–214. Rome: Blake M. E. (1940) "Mosaics of the late empire in Rome and vicinity", *MAAR* 17 (1940) 81–130; Oakeshott W. (1967) *The Mosaics of Rome: from the Third to the Fourteenth Centuries* (London 1967) esp. 94–100; Perler O. (1953) *Die Mozaiken der Juliergruft im Vatikan* (Freiburger Universitätsreden, N.S. 16) (Fribourg, Switz. 1953). Africa: Ben Abed Ben Khader A. (2006) *Tunisian Mosaics. Treasures from Roman Africa* (Los Angeles 2006); Dunbabin K. M. D. (1978) *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford 1978).

Regional Studies, the East: The Levant: Balty J. (1995) *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient* (Centre de Recherches d'Histoire Ancienne 140; Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon 551) (Paris 1995); Bowersock G. W. (2000) "The rich harvest of near-eastern mosaics", in *Selected Papers on Late Antiquity*, by G. W. Bowersock (Bari 2000) 149–58; Bowersock G. W. (2006) *Mosaics as History. The Near East from Late Antiquity to Islam* (Revealing Antiquity 16) (Cambridge, Mass. and London 2006). Syria: Balty J. (1972a) "Nouvelles mosaïques du IV^e siècle sous la 'cathedrale de l'est' ", in *Actes du Colloque Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1969–1971. Bruxelles, 15–18 avril 1972* (Brussels 1972) 163–85; Balty J. (1972b) "Nouvelles mosaïques païennes et groupe épiscopal dit Cathédrale de l'Est à Apamée de Syrie", *CRAI* (1972) 103–27; Balty J. (1977) *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie* (Brussels 1977); Downey G. (1945) "The pagan virtue of megalopsychia in Byzantine Syria", *TAPA* 76 (1945) 279–86. Jordan: Piccirillo M. and Alliata E. (1994) edd. *Umm al-Rasas, Mayfa'ah I: gli scavi del complesso di Santo Stefano* (Jerusalem 1994). Antioch: Campbell S. (1988) *The Mosaics of Antioch* (Subsidia Mediaevalia 15. The Corpus of Mosaic Pavements in Turkey) (Toronto 1988). Palestine: Ovadiah R. and Ovadiah A. (1987) *Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel* (Rome 1987). Sepphoris: Kuhnel B. (2000) "The Synagogue Floor Mosaic in Sepphoris: between Paganism and Christianity", in *From Dura to*

Sepphoris: Studies in Jewish Art and Society in Late Antiquity, edd. L. I. Levine and Z. Weiss (JRA. Supplementary Series 40) (Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2000); Talgam R. and Z. Weiss (2004) *The Mosaics of the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris. Excavated by E. M. Meyers, E. Netzer and C. L. Meyers* (Qedem 44) (Jerusalem 2004); Weiss Z. and Talgam R. (2002) "The Nile Festival building and its mosaics: mythological representations in Early Byzantine Sepphoris", in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East* 3, ed. J. H. Humphrey (JRA. Supplementary Series 49) (Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2002) 55–90.

Representations of Dionysus: Daszewski W. A. (1985) *Dionysos der Erlöser* (Trierer Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 2) (Mainz 1985); Talgam R. and Weiss Z. (2004) *The Mosaics of the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris: Excavated by E. M. Meyers, E. Netzer and C.L. Meyers* (Qedem 44) (Jerusalem 2004).

Representations of Orpheus: Jesnick I. J. (1997) *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic. An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity* (BAR-IS 671) (Oxford 1997); Friedman J. B. (1967) "Syncretism and allegory in the Jerusalem Orpheus mosaic", *Traditio* 23 (1967) 1–13.

Ivory

During the 4th c. the production of ivory panels was still flourishing, helped by a wealthy elite that still favoured this luxurious material. What these panels show has been used to argue for the continuing existence of late pagan ritual within aristocratic circles, with the Fauvel panel or the Diptych of the Nicomachi and Symmachi, whose authenticity has been in question (cfr. Cameron (1984), Cutler (1994), Kinney (1994)), often being mentioned. The content of the Nicomachi-Symmachi diptych has also provoked some discussion, as the figures represented have been variously interpreted as female priests, or, as Simon (1992) suggests, the goddesses Cora-Venus and Cora-Iuventas, symbolising an allegory of a marriage between two members of the most important aristocratic families of the time. A general catalogue illustrating the different types of late antique ivory carving (secular and religious) is collected by Volbach (1976). A short introduction to late antique ivory (and beyond) and another useful catalogue, is Gibson (1994). On the Alexandrine Ivory, preserved in Rome, see Bonacasa Carra (2000).

General: Gaborit-Chopin D. (1978) *Ivoires du Moyen Âge* (Fribourg 1978); Gibson M. (1994) *The Liverpool Ivories. Late Antique and Medieval Ivory and Bone Carving in Liverpool Museum and the Walker Art Gallery* (London 1994); Volbach W. F. (1976) *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Kataloge. Vor- und Frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer 7) (Mainz 1976).

Specific Examples: The Fauvel Panel: Cameron A. (1984) "A new late antique ivory: the Fauvel Panel", *AJA* 88 (1984) 397–402. The Symmachi-Nicomachi

Diptych: Cameron A. (1986) "Pagan ivories", in *Colloque genevois sur Symmaché à l'occasion du mille six centième anniversaire du conflit de l'autel de la Victoire*, ed. F. Paschoud (Paris 1986) 41–64; Kinney D. (1994) "A late antique ivory plaque and modern response", *AJA* 98 (1994) 457–80; Cutler A. (1994) "Suspicio Symmachorum: a postscript to Dale Kinney 'A late antique ivory plaque and modern response'", *AJA* 98 (1994) 473–80; Simon E. (1992) "The diptych of the Symmachi and Nicomachi: an interpretation: in Memoriam Wolfgang F. Volbach 1892–1988", *GaR* 39 (1992) 56–65. *The Alexandrine Ivory*: Bonacasa Carra R. M. (2000) "Ossi e avori "alessandrini" a Roma", in *Roma Aurea. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, edd. S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (Rome 2000) 353–58.

Statuary and Sculpture

By Late Antiquity, statues and images of gods and goddesses were often considered to be demonic, and from time to time they can be found decapitated or with a cross incised on their forehead. Similarly, relief sculpture thought to be too explicitly pagan was at times erased and replaced by neutral or Christian motifs. At the same time, there were many Christians who felt the need to safeguard statues and architecture with historical, artistic and aesthetic value that originated from the classical past (cfr. Caseau (1999) and Stirling (2005)). This can be seen in repeated imperial decrees, attesting to the ongoing practice of mutilation of these elements, but also the ongoing care that was dedicated to them (The Theodosian Code and that of Justinian and the *Novellae* of Theodosius II and Majorianus provide evidence for this). The collections of these laws can be found in Mommsen and Meyer (1905) and Mommsen and Krueger (1870), while Alchermes (1994) sheds further light on those laws issued during the 4th and 5th c.. A recent excellent contribution to the subject, discussing the presence of statues in Late Antiquity, is Bauer and Witschel (2007). Mango (1963) describes the attitudes of the Byzantine viewer to these ancient remains, a common sight in Constantinople.

For a detailed discussion of the modes of statue destruction, see Stewart (1990), while James (1996) stresses that ancient images were thought to house demons and were sources of power. Bonfante and Carter (1987), on the other hand, illustrate, with a late 4th c. group of Heracles and a Hesperid, the importance of aesthetics for non-Christians at a time when pagan statues were dislocated from their original religious contexts. This tendency was already distinguishable in the baths of Zeuxippus in Constantinople, which Constantine furnished with demi-gods, mythological heroes and portraits of famous

Greeks and Romans in order to place the city firmly within the Graeco-Roman tradition, and was articulated best in the hippodrome of the city. Bassett (1991), (1996), (2004) are worth reading for the study of this kind of statuary reuse. Bergmann (1999) and Hannestad (2007) are very useful for the study of newly created classical-style pagan statuary in Late Antiquity, a category often overlooked in the past, as a great deal of ancient statuary has been dated too early. Hannestad (1994) focuses on the subject of the maintenance, restoration, reworking and reuse of ancient statuary. For the attitudes towards ancient (looking) statuary in Gaul, Stirling (2005) is an excellent starting point.

Attitudes Toward Statues: Alchermes J. (1994) "Spolia in Roman cities of the late empire: legislative rationales and architectural reuse", *DOP* 48 (1994) 167–78; Bauer F. A. and Witschel C. (2007) edd. *Statuen in der Spätantike* (Wiesbaden 2007); Bergmann M. (1999) *Chiragan, Aphrodisias, Konstantinopel: Zur mythologischen Skulptur der Spätantike* (Palilia 7) (Wiesbaden 1999); Bonfante L. and Carter C. (1987) "An absent Herakles and a Hesperid: a late antique marble group in New York", *AJA* 91 (1987) 247–57; Caseau B. (1999) "Polemien Lithois. La désacralisation des espaces et des objets religieux païens durant l'Antiquité tardive", in *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident. Études comparées*, ed. M. Kaplan (Byzantia Sorbonensia 18) (Paris 1999) 61–123; Caseau B. (1999) "Sacred landscapes", in *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World*, edd. G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1999) 21–59 (esp. 33–36); Lepelley C. (1994) "Le musée des statues divines. La volonté de sauvegarder le patrimoine artistique païen à l'époque théodosienne", *CahArch* 42 (1994) 5–15; Mommsen T. and Kreuger P. (1870) *Digesta Iustiniani Augusti recognovit adsumpto in operis societatem* (Berlin 1870); Mommsen T. and Meyer P. M. (1905) edd. *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* (Berlin 1905); Stewart P. (1990) "The destruction of statues in Late Antiquity", in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Miles (London 1990) 159–89; Thornton T. C. G. (1986) "The destruction of idols—sinful or meritorious?", *JThS* 37 (1986) 121–29.

Regional Studies: The West: Hubert J. and Hubert M.-C. (1982) "Piété chrétienne ou paganisme? Les statues-reliquaires de l'Europe carolingienne", in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo. Espansione e resistenza: 10–16 aprile 1980* (Spoleto, 1982) 235–75; Stirling L. M. (1994) *Mythological Statuary in Late Antiquity: A Case Study of Villa Decoration in Southwest Gaul* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan 1994); Stirling L. (1997) "Late antique goddesses and other statuary at the villa of La-Garenne-De-Nérac (Lot-et-Garonne)", *Echos du Monde Classique* 41 (n.s.16) (1997) 149–75; Stirling L. (2005) *The Learned Collector. Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul* (Ann Arbor 2005). Constantinople: Bassett S. G. (1991) "The antiquities in the hippodrome of Constantinople", *DOP* 45 (1991) 87–96; Bassett S. G. (1996) "Historiae Custos: sculpture and tradition in the Baths of Zeuxippos",

AJA 100 (1996) 491–506; Bassett S. (2004) *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge 2004); James L. (1996) “‘Pray not to fall into temptation and be on your guard’: pagan statues in Christian Constantinople”, *Gesta* 35 (1996) 12–20; Mango C. (1963) “Antique statuary and the Byzantine beholder”, *DOP* 17 (1963) 53–75.

Syncretism: Hannestad H. (1994) *Tradition in Late Antique Sculpture. Conservation-Modernization- Production* (Acta Jutlandica 69.2. Humanities Series 69) (Aarhus 1994); Hannestad H. (2007) “Late antique mythological sculpture. In search of a chronology”, in *Statuen in der Spätantike*, edd. F. A. Bauer and C. Witschel (Wiesbaden 2007) 274–307.

The Statue of Victory: Pohlsander H. A. (1969) “Victory: the story of a statue”, *Historia* 18 (1969) 588–97. See above: ‘The Statue and Altar of Victory’ and Demarsin (this volume): ‘Pagan Writers on Christianity’ under ‘Symmachus’.

Ceramics: Plaques, Tablewares and Lamps

Most of the material described above can be situated within the realm of political and elite culture: glass, gold ware and silverware but also statues and mosaics. Ceramic products and containers on the other hand were more commonplace, and were accessible not only to the wealthy but also to the less rich. The iconography found on them is also more variable and the subject matter represented dependend on the type of vessel on which it appeared. Dionysiac scenes are often found on eating and drinking ware for example, such as *oinophoroi* and dishes, as late as the 5th c. A.D. The link between dining, drinking and Bacchic scenes is obvious, but the motif seems to have been more widely fashionable as it appears elsewhere on other types of vessel as well. Oil lamps, on the other hand, when they were provided with iconography, were very distinct from tableware in what they had depicted on them. These were generally more ‘earthy’ subjects or just simple designs, something very different from the imagery we see on sarcophagi or frescoes for example.

This hierarchy of iconography is examined by Provoost (1986) for Rome, a pattern that is repeated in Treveran ceramic production and which we can see in glass production as well (Goethert (2007)). Such a pattern of much simpler iconography may simply be due to the huge number of these objects, their generally smaller surface area and the fact that they were for private use and were not display items. For example, oil lamps, whose small size meant only simple images or symbols could fit. However, this does not mean oil lamps were not significant objects; lamps with pagan iconography were retrieved

from the Athenian Agora from the 3rd and 4th centuries, for example (Perlzweig 1961). Ceramic iconography not only illustrates the continuing Hellenism in late antique culture, but also, occasionally, evidence for religious syncretism between paganism and Christianity. Opris (2003) suggests many examples of such imagery can be found in Scythia, while Frazer (1979) sees this in a pilgrim's mould from Mamre.

General: Opris I. I. C. (2003) "Iconographie et symbolique chrétienne et païenne reflétées dans les découvertes céramiques de la province de Scythie (IV^e–VI^e siècle ap. J.C.)", in *New Europe College Yearbook 1999–2000*, ed. I. Vainovski-Mihai (Bucharest 2003) 427–69.

Lamps: Provoost A. (1986) "Das Zeugnis der Fresken und Grabplatten in der Katakomben S. Pietro e Marcellino im Vergleich mit dem Zeugnis der Lampen und Gläser aus Rom", *Boreas. Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie* 9 (1986) 152–72; Goethert K. (2007) "Keramikproduktion in Trier", in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse. Ausstellungskatalog*, edd. A. Demandt and J. Engemann (Trier and Mainz 2007) 396–403; Perlzweig J. (1961) *Lamps of the Roman Period. First to Seventh Century after Christ* (The Athenian Agora 7) (Princeton 1961).

Other Vessels: Frazer M. E. (1979) "A syncretistic pilgrim's mould from Mamre (?)", *Gesta* 18 (1979) 137–45. Laffi E. (2004) "Dionysiac scenes on Sagalassian oinophoroi from Seleuceia Sidera in Pisidia", in *Games and Festivals in Classical Antiquity. Proceedings of the Conference held in Edinburgh 10–12 July 2000*, edd. S. Bell and G. Davies (BAR–IS 1220) (Oxford 2004) 125–35; Salomonson J. W. (1979) "Les plats de terre cuite africaine du IV^{ème} siècle et les jeux de l'amphithéâtre", in *Voluptatem spectandi non perdat sed mutet. Observations sur l'iconographie des martyrs en Afrique romaine* (Amsterdam 1979) 42–50.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAGANISM IN LATE ANTIQUITY

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA AND THE CONCEPT OF PAGANISM

Peter Van Nuffelen

Abstract

In scholarship the term ‘paganism’ is often rejected on the grounds that it reflects Christian attempts to project a false unity onto the variety of ancient religions. Although this is true to a certain extent, this paper argues that philosophers of the imperial age already ascribed a fundamental unity to all religions, and that Christian apologists drew on these ideas to formulate their own concept of ‘paganism’. The creation of paganism should thus be seen as a dialectical process, not as a one-sided projection.

INTRODUCTION: ‘PAGANISM’

It is received wisdom that the term ‘paganism’ should only be used between inverted commas. The reason for this can be summarised as follows. Invented by Christianity in an attempt to systematise and dismiss the loosely-knit amalgam of traditional Graeco-Roman and new Oriental cults, the concept conveys, as we all know, a wrong impression of coherence and unity to what are in reality the pluralist religions of Greece and Rome.¹ Using the term in modern research equals treading in the footsteps of the Christian apologists who were trying to root out the venom of pagan superstition, and doing so merely perpetuates error and deformation.² Admittedly, we witness in Late Antiquity attempts by philosophers like Macrobius and Proclus to adumbrate some kind of system in their traditional beliefs, but these

¹ Christian term: the term *paganus* is in this sense first encountered in two early 4th c. inscriptions: *CIL* 6. 30463 = *ILCV* 1342; *CIL* 10.2 7112 = *ILCV* 1549. Cf. Chuvin (2002). For the term *hellenismos*, see Bowersock (1990); Cameron (1993); Van Liefferinge (2001). Pluralist religions: see the titles of Beard *et al.* (1998) and Price (1999).

² Fowden (1982) 182; Beard *et al.* (1998) 312; Frankfurter (1998) 33; Maas (2000) 166; Rothaus (2000) 305; Leppin (2004) 62.

are due to the challenge and pressure of Christianity.³ Like all other deconstructed terms, paganism only survives for want of an alternative, and, for the time being, it should be safely locked up between inverted commas.

Two main attempts to solve this deadlock seem to have been made, but they all lead into the same cul-de-sac. One is that we should use 'polytheism', and conform to current anthropological practice.⁴ Polytheism, however, can be easily condemned on the same charges as paganism. As far as we know, the Hellenised Jew Philo of Alexandria was the first to stigmatise Roman and Greek religion as *polytheos*, and the term was later eagerly taken over by Christian authors.⁵ With this history, the opposition of polytheism and monotheism turns out to be as much Judaeo-Christian as is that between paganism and Christianity.⁶ Moreover, it might not be an adequate term either. Recent work on pagan monotheism has argued that, at least in Late Antiquity, there may have been a monotheistic brain behind the stunning variety of divine faces in Roman and Greek religion.⁷ In addition, polytheism may do justice to the fact that there is more than one god in classical religion, but not to the fact that in the Roman and Greek world many religions competed for attraction. Polytheism may thus be as little adapted to describe the reality of ancient religions as the term it is supposed to replace.

On the other hand, one may try to dodge the difficulties involved in assessing theological conceptions (one God or many) by shifting attention to actual ritual practice. How people ritually acted may indeed yield a truer picture of how 'pagans' and 'Christians' really differed or, even, how close they were in many respects.⁸ This is a most valuable approach, yet one which in recent years has acquired something of an ideological rigidity. At times it seems to be an axiom that belief is a modern concept, especially influenced by protestant theological reflection (Schleiermacher probably being the main culprit), and consequently utterly unsuitable for Roman and Greek religion where

³ Chuvin (1991) 9–15; Fowden (1993) 38; Millar (1994) 105; Beard *et al.* (1998) 383–84; Athanassiadi & Frede (1999) 5; Liebeschuetz (1999); Lee (2000) 10.

⁴ Fowden (1991) 119; Maas (2000) 166.

⁵ E.g. Philo *De migratione Abrahami*, 69, *De Opificio Mundi*, 171.

⁶ Ahn (1993); Barnes (1994) x–xi.

⁷ Athanassiadi & Frede (1999).

⁸ Rothaus (1996).

belief supposedly did not play a major role at all.⁹ I regard this position as an attempt to reify what is in reality a methodological restriction. One can indeed consider the ritual approach as the best one to study ancient religions, because it is easier to access ritual than beliefs or because ritual is the foremost expression of ancient religions. This is different, however, from denying the role of theology, religious psychology and thought in ancient religions altogether, a position that is unsustainable.¹⁰ Moreover, by celebrating ritual, are we not running the danger of embracing another Christian apologetic cliché, which sees paganism as a bunch of rites devoid of intelligent reflection, to which even philosophy could not give a coherent meaning?¹¹ We should be careful not to identify the opposition between paganism and Christianity with the divide between ritual and belief, a mistake that betrays as much a unilateral understanding of Roman religion as a blindness for the ritual dimension in Christianity.

Ideology is a Hydra: the more of its heads you cut away, the more persistent they are in harassing you. For all their denunciation of ideological misrepresentation in the term 'paganism', the alternatives are themselves not entirely satisfactory. Yet there does not seem to be any real alternative. With the coming of postmodernism, heroes like Hercules are no more and we will have to accommodate life with the Hydra. But life with 'paganism' can be made easier. In what follows, I will practise the archaeology of paganism—archaeology in the Foucauldian sense that is. I want to show that paganism, although it gained its present form in Christian polemic, is essentially a dialectical concept, a construct that incorporates earlier strands of pagan reflection on their own religions. I do not want to repeat what is sufficiently known, namely that Christian anti-pagan polemic exploited for its own purposes the philosophical debates on divination or on oracles and fused it with the Jewish and biblical critique on idolatry.¹² I want to go one step further and show that the concept of paganism we find in Christian apologetics draws for its essential features on ideas already current in Early Imperial philosophical thought. In particular I am

⁹ Belief a modern concept: Frankfurter (1998); Rothaus (2000) 4. No role for belief: this tendency can be seen in Price (1999).

¹⁰ Bendlin (2000); King (2003); Rüpke (2004).

¹¹ Athenagoras *Presbeia* 13–30. Such ideas also underlie Augustine's argument in *De civ. D.* 6–7.

¹² E.g. Fredouille (1986).

thinking of the idea for which the term ‘paganism’ is often criticised, namely that all different religions of the Mediterranean constitute in some way a coherent entity. Consequently, it was not under the pressure of Christianity, as is usually claimed, that Graeco-Roman thought started to perceive its religions as a unified whole.

I do not want to suggest that the criticism laid at the door of paganism is entirely unjustified, nor do I want to dismiss the profound influence of Christian polemics on our modern concept of paganism. By dismantling the edifice into its individual building blocks, I hope to show that this concept uses Early Imperial philosophical ideas for its foundations. Even when denouncing the essentially unsuited nature of paganism to describe the Greek and Roman religions and its birth in Christian polemic, one will have to accept that this concept originated in a dialectical relationship with pagan thought itself.

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA’S CONCEPT OF GREEK RELIGION

All this cannot be done in a single paper and so I will concentrate on one important work, one of the places where ‘paganism’ is born: the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius of Caesarea, a massive fifteen volume work written in the early 4th c. A.D. (between 313 and 324). As I will argue, Eusebius seems to have drawn his concept of ‘Greek religion’ (what we would call ‘paganism’) from earlier philosophical reflection on the subject. The coherence and essential characteristics he ascribes to paganism seem to have come from 2nd c. Middle-Platonist authors, read and quoted by Eusebius himself.

The *Praeparatio Evangelica* is a work only Eusebius could write. Just like his *Church History* or his *Life of Constantine*, it uses traditional literary motifs as a springboard in order to create something new and hard to classify. Its fifteen books are half of a gigantic apologetic enterprise. The *Praeparatio Evangelica* aims at showing that the Christians had good reasons to abandon Greek traditions in favour of those of the ‘barbaric’ Hebrews.¹³ In the sequel, the *Demonstratio Evangelica* of twenty books, Eusebius shows why the Christians did not simply convert to Judaism but established a tradition of their own.¹⁴ No other Christian apology

¹³ *PE* 1.1.11–12, 1.5.2, 1.5.11–12, 1.9.1.

¹⁴ *PE* 15.1.8–9, 15.62.16–18, *DE* pr. For this topic, see now Johnson (2006).

can rival, in scope and in length, Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, which attempts no less than an overview of the religious traditions of the ancient world. To do this, Eusebius needed to know what paganism was, or more precisely, in his terms, what Greek religion consisted of. He apparently did: throughout the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, he uses an almost identical definition of Greek religion.¹⁵ As I hope to show, it is not without interest. The following two passages may suffice to give a first impression of Eusebius' definition of paganism:

Ποίας δὲ καταξιωθήσεσθαι συγγνώμης τοὺς τοὺς ἐξ αἰῶνος μὲν παρὰ πᾶσιν Ἑλλήσι καὶ βαρβάροις κατὰ τε πόλεις καὶ ἀγροὺς παντοίοις ἱεροῖς καὶ τελεταῖς καὶ μυστηρίοις πρὸς ἀπάντων ὁμοῦ βασιλέων τε καὶ νομοθετῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων θεολογουμένους ἀποστραφέντας, ἐλομένους δὲ τὰ ἀσεβῆ καὶ ἄθεα τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις;

How can they be pardoned, the people who turned away from the divinities that traditionally received worship among all Greeks and barbarians in the cities and the countryside, in all kinds of temples, initiations and mysteries, by all the kings and lawgivers, and philosophers; the people who then chose from among mankind's achievements, the irreligious and atheistic? (*PE* 1.2.3)

Καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσι, κατὰ πάσας χώρας τε καὶ πόλεις, ἐν τε ἱεροῖς καὶ μυστηρίοις, αὐτὰ δὴ ταῦτα καὶ ὅσα τούτοις ὅμοια παραφυλάττετο.

And also, in the other nations, across all countries and cities, in the temples and the mysteries, these rites (Phoenician and Egyptian), and others similar to them, were observed. (*PE* 10.4.6)

These and many other passages scattered over the *Praeparatio* presuppose a standardised concept of Greek religion.¹⁶ Its comprehensiveness is striking. Its geographical scope is explicitly defined as widely as possible: paganism is defined as the religion professed both by Greeks and barbarians—the Romans hardly play a role in the *Praeparatio*—and it is practised both in the cities and in the countryside.¹⁷ Its principal manifestations are mentioned: temples and mysteries, obviously juxtaposing

¹⁵ This feature has gone unnoticed in scholarship. Even the recent book of A. Kofsky (2000) on Eusebius' anti-pagan polemic has omitted to analyse Eusebius' concept of paganism.

¹⁶ *PE* 1.10.55, 2.5.3, 5.1.1, 14.9.5, 15.1.2–3.

¹⁷ The Roman tradition is produced once as an example of a purer form of worship (2.8), based on Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

public and secret cult. It is, finally, the religion taught by different kinds of people: kings, lawgivers and philosophers.

At first sight, the comprehensiveness and fixed character of this definition are enough to prove that it represents an outsider's view on Greek religion. No Greek would define his own religion in this way. But this does not necessarily have to mean that the elements from which it is composed are made up by Eusebius. Indeed, Eusebius is here reflecting earlier philosophical thought on religion, as we can see by observing two elements in this definition: first of all, the essential identity of the religions of all the different people of the Mediterranean (and hence the world) is assumed; and secondly, the mystery cults seem to occupy a remarkably important position in this unified view on religion.

All Religions are One

In the passages quoted above, it is assumed that the religions of the Greeks and of the barbarians are fundamentally identical; Eusebius ascribes the same basic formal characteristics to barbarian and Greek religion. A genealogy explains this formal identity: throughout the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, Eusebius assumes that Greek religion originated in Egypt, then Phoenicia, and that it was then transmitted to Greece:¹⁸

Ὡςπερ οὖν τὴν περὶ πλείονων θεῶν δόξαν τὰ τε μυστήρια καὶ τὰς τελετὰς καὶ προσέτι τὰς ιστορίας καὶ τὰς μυθικὰς περὶ θεῶν διηγήσεις τῶν τε μύθων τὰς ἀλληγορουμένας φυσιολογίας καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν δεισιδαίμονα πλάνην παρὰ βαρβάρων εἰληφθαι αὐτοῖς φθάσας ὁ λόγος ἀπέδειξεν, ὁπνίκα τὰ πάντα τοὺς Ἕλληνας, γῆν πολλὴν πλανηθέντας, οὐκ ἀταλαιπώρως μὲν, ἐξ ἐράνου δὲ τῶν παρὰ βαρβάρους μαθημάτων τὴν οἰκείαν ὑποστήσασθαι θεολογίαν ἐφωράσαμεν (...)

Polytheism, mysteries and initiations, as well as the histories, the mythical stories about the gods, the natural allegories of the myths and all the rest of the superstitious error were taken from the barbarians by the Greeks, as shown in the preceding argument, where we caught the Greeks, having travelled all over the world and not without any trouble, in forming their own theology from the teachings of the barbarians. (10.1.3)

¹⁸ See also *PE* 1.6.7–2.3.

An important role in this process is attributed to Orpheus and Cadmus:

Οἷς τὰ μὲν ἐκ Φοινίκης Κάδμος ὁ Ἀγήνορος, τὰ δὲ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου περὶ θεῶν ἢ καὶ ποθεν ἄλλοθεν, μυστήρια καὶ τελετὰς ξοάνων τε ιδρύσεις καὶ ὕμνους ᾠδὰς τε καὶ ἐπωδὰς, ἥτοι ὁ Θράκιος Ὀρφεὺς ἢ καὶ τις ἕτερος Ἑλλήνῃ ἢ βάρβαρος, τῆς πλάνης ἀρχηγοὶ γενόμενοι, συνεστήσαντο.

Mysteries, initiations, the setting up of statues, hymns, chants and incantations, were brought to the Greeks from Phoenicia by Cadmus, the son of Agenor, and from Egypt or elsewhere, by either the Thracian Orpheus or another Greek or barbarian, having become the leaders of this delusion. (*PE* 10.4.4)

All religions are branches of the same tree; for all their sartorial differences, they are in the end identical. This genealogy of Greek religion is maybe the least remarkable feature of Eusebius' definition. Ideas of this sort were long current in the Roman empire, and Eusebius can quote, for example, Philo of Byblos and Diodorus of Sicily in his support. There is, however, also a philosophical point in retracing religion to the earliest civilisations of mankind. In order to understand this, I must first address the second and less self-evident feature of Eusebius' definition, namely the role he attributes to mystery cults.

Mystery Cults as a Locus of Truth

In the previous quotation, Eusebius, noticeably, first mentions mystery cults and initiations as expressions of Greek religion. Although Eusebius is, throughout his oeuvre, more than once guilty of careless and creative writing, this is not without importance. In other passages, too, mystery cults are seen as central to Greek religion:

τοῦτο γὰρ δέον ἦν ποιεῖν τοῖς τάληθές ἐπεγνωκόσι, μηδὲ κατάγειν καὶ καταβάλλειν εἰς αἰσχροὺς καὶ ἐμπαθεῖς ἀρρητολογίας καὶ σκότου μυχοῖς ἀνδρῶν τε οἰκοδομαῖς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐναποκλείειν, ὥς ἔνδον εὐρήσοντας τὸν θεόν, μηδ' ἐν ξοάνοις ἐξ ἀψύχου πεποιημένοις ὕλης τὰς θείας τιμᾶν οἶεσθαι δυνάμεις μηδὲ μὴν γεώδεσιν ἄτμοις αἱμάτων καὶ λύθρου καὶ νεκρῶν ζώων αἱμασι κεχαρισμένα τῷ θεῷ πράττειν νομίζειν.

That (worshipping the one true God) is what should have been done by those in possession of the truth (philosophers), and not to degrade and debase the venerable name of God into disgraceful and impassioned mysteries; not to shut themselves up in chambers and corners of darkness and human buildings as if they can find God in there; nor to assume that they can worship the divine powers in statues made of inanimate substance; nor to think that they please God with earthy vapours of blood and gore or with the blood of dead animals. (3.13.23)

This impassionate attack on pagan philosophers chides them for claiming to know the truth but still clinging to the traditional cults. According to Eusebius, some pagans, in particular Plato, were close to the Hebrew truth, but even he refused to give up traditional worship. Yet in a polemical reversal of Eusebius' own critique of paganism as a polytheistic aberration,¹⁹ paganism is depicted as what looks like a kind of perverse monotheism:

Ταύτη καὶ Ἑλληνες καὶ βάρβαροι, σοφοί τε καὶ ἰδιῶται, χαμαὶ καὶ ἐπὶ γαστέρα πεσόντες ὡς θεῶ τῇ ἡδονῇ προσεκύνησαν πρηνεῖς τε σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐρπετῶν δίκην καταβάλλοντες ἄμαχον καὶ ἀπαραίτητον θεὸν ταύτην ἡγήσαντό τε καὶ ἔστεξαν, ἔν τε ᾠδαῖς καὶ ὕμνοις ἔν τε θεῶν ἑορταῖς ἔν τε ταῖς πανδήμοις θέαις μόνης τῆς αἰσχροῦς καὶ ἀκολάστου ἡδονῆς τὰ ὄργια καὶ τὰς ἀσέμνους τελετὰς μυσούμενοί τε καὶ τελοῦντες, ὥς, εἰ καὶ τι ἄλλο, καὶ τόδε καλῶς παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνηρῆσθαι· ἀρχὴ γὰρ πορνείας ἐπίνοια εἰδώλων.

In this way, Greeks and barbarians, wise and simple, fall on the ground and on their bellies and worship Pleasure like a goddess. Having thrown themselves on the ground like reptiles, they think of her as an invincible and inexorable goddess and cherish her, being initiated in chants and hymns, in celebrations of gods and in public festivities, into the *orgia* and the unseemly mysteries of no other divinity than infamous and licentious Pleasure, so that, if nothing else, this was well suppressed by us. The origin of fornication is indeed the invention of idols. (7.2.4).

This passage draws on polemical stereotypes already found in, for example, Dio Chrysostom (12.36–37), where he argues against the Epicureans by establishing links between atheism and hedonism. Both passages, the second even more than the first, indicate that Eusebius saw the mystery cults as the central manifestation of paganism. In the first quotation, mystery cults are clearly the first expression of paganism. In the second, it is suggested that it is especially in the mysteries that the supreme goddess of paganism, vile pleasure, is worshipped.

Other passages bear out the same message that mystery cults are central to paganism. In 4.16.11, Eusebius claims that human sacrifice happened in the mysteries. This is another attempt to brand the mysteries as the full expression of the perversity of Greek religion. For Eusebius, blood sacrifice was a central element of pagan cult, and according to him (and pagans like Porphyry and much earlier

¹⁹ E.g. *PE* 1.1.3, 10.1.3.

Theophrastus) blood sacrifice logically implied human sacrifice.²⁰ Finally, Eusebius often indicates that another less respectable element of Greek religion, myths, is best found in the mysteries. Myths are indeed best expressed in mystery cults, because the mysteries were organised in accordance with the myths.²¹ The stories of fornication and adultery that bring out the perversity of Greek religion, are most correctly preserved in the mysteries.

Yet Eusebius' references to mysteries excel in vagueness and generality, something that is remarkable for an author who is usually keen to flood his reader with superfluous detail. Eusebius seems hardly interested in real mystery cults. Contrary to some earlier and contemporary anti-pagan polemics, like the *Protrepticus* of Clement of Alexandria and the *De errore profanorum religionum* of the convert Firmicus Maternus, mystery cults do not occupy much space in the polemic of Eusebius; only one chapter, taken from Clement, explicitly criticises them.²² They clearly do not constitute his prime polemical target. Perhaps one might argue that mystery cults were the foremost expression of Greek religion in Eusebius' time, but this is explaining the puzzling by the unknown, as it is hard to determine their importance by the early 4th c.

Eusebius' vagueness on the precise role of mystery cults sufficiently indicates that we should not be looking in the concrete and historical for an explanation, but in the general and philosophical. We should try to grasp what role mystery cults play in his understanding of Greek religion. Only at the end of book 14 does an answer to this query emerge, in a passage where Eusebius opposes the disagreement among the pagan philosophers about the truth to the claim he apparently found among them, namely that certain knowledge about the gods can be revealed in mystery cults and in the theology of the ancients:

Τί δὲ καὶ περὶ θεῶν νεώτερα χρῆν ἐπιζητεῖν τολμᾶν ἢ στασιάζειν καὶ διπυκτεύειν ἀλλήλοις, εἰ δὴ ἀσφαλῆς καὶ βεβαία θεῶν εὕρησις καὶ γνώσις εὐσεβείας ἀληθῆς ἐν τελεταῖς καὶ μυστηρίοις τῇ τε ἄλλῃ τῶν παλαιτάτων περιείχετο θεολογία, αὐτὴν ἐκείνην παρὸν ἀκίνητον καὶ ὁμολογουμένην συμφώνως περιέπειν;

²⁰ Cf. Porphyry *De Abstinencia* 2.27.1 (drawn from Theophrastus), 4.21.2. Cf. Rives (1995).

²¹ *PE* 1.10.55, 2.pr.2, 2.2.63–64, 10.1.2, 15.1.2–3.

²² The only important attack is *PE* 2.3, quoted from Clem. Al. *Protr.* 11.1–23.1.

And what use would it have been to dare to inquire into something new about the gods, or to disagree and fight among each other, if the infallible and certain discovery of the gods and the true knowledge of religion were contained in initiations, mysteries and in the rest of the theology of the ancients, this knowledge being treated as unchangeable and unanimously recognised? (14.9.7)

Is there not a contradiction, Eusebius asserts, between the general philosophical claim that true knowledge is to be found in the mysteries and the constant quarrel about the truth among the learned and the wise? For all its brevity, this passage contains the key to the understanding of the role mystery cults play in Eusebius. They are the prime expression of paganism, because, according to the pagan philosophers themselves, it was there that the ancient and most fundamental truth about the gods could be found; mystery cults are part of the theology of the ancients, and in perfect agreement with their teachings.

Let us briefly pause before looking into the sources of this definition of paganism. Eusebius sees in the religions of the Mediterranean an essential unity, as they all derive from primitive man's intuitions about the divine and from the institutions established to sustain this knowledge. This knowledge about the divine is best preserved in the mystery cults, which function as the institutional core of paganism, which was historically transmitted from Egypt to Phoenicia and then passed on to Greece. We can clearly recognise here an element of the coherence we find in the modern concept of paganism.

For all its references to ritual practice and geographical extension, it is essentially a philosophical definition. Mysteries are not put forward because they would be the foremost manifestations of Greek religion (which they were not), but because they contain the philosophical truth about the gods. The identity of the different religions is not sustained through a comparative analysis of rites and customs, but through a historical genealogy. Eusebius judges ancient religions on their philosophical truth, and for all the horror he expresses at the debased and immoral nature of the mysteries and other rites, their despicable nature stems from the fact that they express wrong conceptions of the divine. There is no evidence that Eusebius had first hand knowledge of real rituals: the *Praeparatio Evangelica* is the most bookish of books, an ivory tower academic study rather than anthropological fieldwork on paganism, and throughout this work Eusebius is not looking for purity of ritual but for purity of doctrine, which normally will guarantee purity of worship. Indeed, Plato is criticised for taking

part in pagan rituals although he was fully bred in Hebrew beliefs; and he did this, Eusebius points out, not because he was enchanted by these rites, but simply because he feared the Athenian mob, which had already killed his master Socrates.²³

SOURCES

The source of Eusebius' definition clearly must be philosophical. In my opinion, the most appropriate candidate is Middle Platonism, where we encounter both the idea that mystery cults were a locus of truth and that all religions were considered more or less identical. I cannot attempt here a full analysis of the philosophy of religion of this period,²⁴ but two fragments, from a lost work of Plutarch (late 1st–early 2nd c. A.D.) and from the Neopythagorean (whatever that label means) Numenius (late 2nd c. A.D.), will, I hope, suffice to make the point. Significantly, as both fragments are preserved by Eusebius, this attests that Eusebius did read these authors with due attention.

Plutarch

According to Plutarch, it is not by virtue of divine inspiration that the truth about the cosmos is to be found in mysteries.²⁵ Rather, their antiquity guarantees the preservation of ancient wisdom in them. The first men had perceived basic truths about the cosmos, but expressed them in a veiled and unclear language. This view was widespread among philosophers of the Early Roman empire.²⁶ Plutarch states it thus in this fragment of *On the Festival of the Images at Plataeae*:

“Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ παλαιὰ φυσιολογία καὶ παρ’ Ἑλλήσι καὶ βαρβάροις λόγος ἦν φυσικὸς ἐγκεκαλυμμένος μύθοις, τὰ πολλὰ δι’ αἰνιγμάτων καὶ ὑπονοιῶν ἐπικρυφός, καὶ μυστηριώδης θεολογία, τὰ τε λαλούμενα τῶν σιγωμένων ἀσαφέστερα τοῖς πολλοῖς ἔχουσα καὶ τὰ σιγώμενα τῶν λαλουμένων ὑποπτότερα, κατάδηλον ἔστιν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς ἔπει καὶ τοῖς Αἰγυπτιακοῖς καὶ Φρυγίοις· μάλιστα δ’ οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετὰς ὀργιασμοὶ

²³ *PE* 14.1–4. Cf. 11.13.

²⁴ See my forthcoming book *Rethinking the Gods. Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post-Hellenic Period* (Cambridge).

²⁵ Pace Brisson (2004) 60–63.

²⁶ Boys-Stones (2001) 107–10; Van Nuffelen (2007) and (2010).

καὶ τὰ δρώμενα συμβολικῶς ἐν ταῖς ἱερουργίαις τὴν τῶν παλαιῶν ἐμφαίνει διάνοιαν.

Ancient natural science among both Greeks and foreign nations took the form of a scientific account hidden in mythology, veiled for the most part in riddles and hints, or of a theology such as is found in mystery-ceremonies: in it what is spoken is less clear to the masses than what is unsaid, and what is unsaid gives cause for more speculation than what is said. This is evident from the Orphic poems and the accounts given by Phrygians and Egyptians. But nothing does more to reveal what was in the mind of the ancients than the rites of initiation and the ritual acts that are performed in religious services with symbolic intent.²⁷

Mysteries appear not only as loci of truth, they are loci of primordial truth, preserving in the best possible way the wisdom of the ancients. This wisdom is philosophical in essence, although not necessarily so in language: the truth is not expressed in plain philosophical language but in the mythological idiom one also finds in other religious manifestations. Moreover, it is not only Greek mysteries that are given a privileged position, as most people of the ancient world, according to Plutarch, share the primordial truth through their religion. Although the passage is quite unique in its explicitness, many parallels for this conception of mystery cults and its position in foreign cults can be found in Plutarch, and in contemporary authors.²⁸

Eusebius obviously has this passage in mind when he talks about the truth hidden in the mysteries, as certain parallels in vocabulary suggest: ‘the true knowledge of religion was contained in initiations, mysteries and in the rest of the theology of the ancients, this knowledge being treated as unchangeable and unanimously recognised’.²⁹ It may also account for the prominence attributed to mystery cults in Eusebius’ definition, which is not therefore due to their prominence in practice but due to their philosophical valuation by much older authors.

²⁷ *PE* 3.1 = Plutarch Fr. 157.1 (trans. F. Sandbach).

²⁸ Plutarch: see Van Nuffelen (2007) and (2010). Other authors: See Heraclitus *Allegories* 3.3, 6.4, 53.1; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.33–39; Cornutus *Theol. Graec.* 28 pp. 56.22–57.5. These parallels show that the idea is not limited to Middle Platonism, but also present in imperial stoicism. This is of little importance for my argument here.

²⁹ *PE* 14.9.7.

Numenius

My second example is Numenius of Apamea, a pre-Plotinian philosopher. In a brief fragment from his *Peri tagathou*, also conveniently preserved by Eusebius,³⁰ he writes:

Εἰς δὲ τοῦτο δεήσει εἰπόντα καὶ σημηνόμενον ταῖς μαρτυρίαις ταῖς Πλάτωνος ἀναχωρήσασθαι καὶ συνδῆσασθαι τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ Πυθαγόρου, ἐπικαλέσασθαι δὲ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ εὐδοκιμοῦντα, προσφερόμενον αὐτῶν τὰς τελετὰς καὶ τὰ δόγματα τὰς τε ἰδρύσεις συντελουμένας Πλάτωνι ὁμολογουμένως, ὅποσας Βραχμᾶνες καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Μάγοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι διέθεντο.

With respect to this matter (the problem of God), having supported and sealed it with the testimonies from Plato, we must go back in time and relate it to the teachings of Pythagoras, and then call on people of renown, showing their initiations, dogmas and foundations inasmuch as they agree with Plato, and all those the Brahmans, the Jews, the Magi and Egyptians have established. (Numenius, Fr. 1a [Des Places] = Eusebius, *PE* 9.7.1)

In this fragment, we see the same two elements as in Plutarch, although articulated in a different way and with a distinct philosophical flavour. The fundamental truth has been laid down by Plato, who is the measuring rod for all glimpses of wisdom to be found both in earlier philosophy and in religion. Plato had indeed, according to Numenius, retrieved the primitive wisdom of the ancients.³¹ In this passage the role of mysteries is less accentuated than in Plutarch, but other fragments of Numenius illustrate the importance he accorded to them.³² It also shows that for Numenius all the religions of the world contain the same wisdom. This is supported by many other fragments, which show his pervasive interest in the foreign, the strange and the occult.

Was Eusebius influenced by Numenius? He must have been, because everybody was. Numenius' alleged influence on later philosophy stands in reverse proportion to the meagre remains of his work Eusebius has mainly preserved for us. It was said in Antiquity that Plotinus plagiarised him.³³ Porphyry, who reports this, was himself heavily indebted to Numenius, as the dominating figure of Neoplatonism in Late

³⁰ For Numenius in Eusebius, see Carriker (1996). On the topic in general, see Momigliano (1975).

³¹ Boys-Stones (2001) 138–42.

³² Fr. 1b and 55.

³³ Porph. *Plot.* 17–18.

Antiquity, Proclus, asserts.³⁴ More to the point here, modern scholarship attributes a fundamental influence of Numenius on Eusebius, whose particular logos-theology is according to H. Strutwolf, based on a combination of Plotinian and Numenian principles.³⁵ In the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, this alleged influence is far less visible. Eusebius has scant interest in Numenius himself or in the particularities of his own doctrine. In this work, the philosopher of Apamea is merely a suited interpreter of Plato's thought: in the *Praeparatio* he is often said to 'interpret' Plato.³⁶ And indeed, what is presented in Eusebius as Platonic is actually what Middle-Platonists thought Plato had said. One of his sources for this was Numenius.

A Numenian influence is indeed most probable, and we do find the two central elements of Eusebius' definition of paganism (the fundamental unity of all religions and the central role of mystery cults) in the quoted fragment. Just as in Plutarch's fragment, it also implies a view on the historical transmission of religion. If all the different cultures share the same truth in their religions, this must have been either derived from the same source or transmitted from one culture to another. As noted, this is also central in Eusebius' concept of paganism.

Porphyry

I might be criticised for disregarding the most obvious source of Eusebius' thought. It has been claimed, most forcefully by Michael Frede, that the layout of Eusebius' argument is an answer to Porphyry's critique of Christianity.³⁷ In particular, the historical thrust of the *Praeparatio Evangelica* would be directed against Porphyry's critique on the Christians, who had abandoned the ancestral customs in favour of some new and unfounded religion.

³⁴ Procl. *In Ti.* 1.77.22–23 (Diehl) = Numenius Fr. 37.25–26 (Des Places).

³⁵ Strutwolf (1999) 187–95, 274–75.

³⁶ *PE* 11.17.11 = Numenius Fr. 11; *PE* 11.21.7 = Numen. Fr. 2. See also 11.10.1, 11.18.25, 13.13.42, 13.18.17. *Hermeneuein* and *di Hermeneuein* imply a faithful exposition of the original doctrine and not an original interpretation (as Des Places (1974) 53 seems to assume). The same verbs are used, for example, by Philo of Alexandria (*PE* 11.24); see also *PE* 11.27.20: Porphyry *exaploi* Plato's doctrines.

³⁷ Frede (1994); Kofsky (2000) 17, 250–75. On Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, see Goulet (2004) with further literature.

It is possible that there is some Porphyrian influence. Certainly, the stress on the fundamental common identity of all religions is something we find in Porphyry. As Marco Zambon has recently shown, this is a thought Porphyry had in common with Numenius, and may even have borrowed from him.³⁸ So Eusebius may have received Numenian opinions through the intermediary of Porphyry, who was indeed reputed to have always had the same views as Numenius.³⁹

But we cannot attribute Eusebius' definition entirely to Porphyry, as is already suggested by the fact that Eusebius read and quoted the Middle-Platonists themselves. In terms of the central role of the mystery cults, a dependency on Porphyry is less plausible. Although Porphyry indulged once in the writing of a poem entitled *Hieros gamos*, replete with mystical vocabulary and imagery, mystery cults seem to play no important role in his work; references are merely occasional and no particular function is attributed to them.⁴⁰ One interesting example is his *Life of Pythagoras*, which hardly pays any attention to Pythagoras' reputedly numerous initiations in all kinds of mysteries, putting it in particular contrast to their prominent presence in his contemporary Iamblichus' account.⁴¹ In Porphyry's numerous other works, references are scarce, and often quotations from other authors.⁴² For example, in the *Cave of the Nymphs*, there are some references to the cult of Mithras, which are probably taken from Numenius, Cronius, and Pallas, and in *De abstinentia*, Mithraism is the only mystery cult explicitly, and briefly, discussed.⁴³ But in none of these passages is there a hint that Porphyry attributed to mystery cults the same elevated role as did Plutarch.⁴⁴

This difference in appreciation of mystery cults points to a more profound distinction between Early Imperial thought and Neoplatonism. Plutarch and Numenius recognised that the ancient truth was deposited in mystery cults, which could be retrieved by philosophical analysis. To find this ancestral truth was the task set for the philosopher of this age. Consequently, religion is seen as a different expression of the

³⁸ Zambon (2002) 248–50.

³⁹ Procl. *In Ti.* 1.77.22–23 (Diehl) = Numen. Fr. 37.25–26 (Des Places).

⁴⁰ *Hieros gamos*: Porph. *Plot.* 15.1–5.

⁴¹ Porph. *Life of Pythagoras* 6–8, 11–12; Iambl. *VP* 14, 18–19, 72, 75, 138, 151.

⁴² Porph. *Abst.* 2.36.6, 3.16, 4.5.4.

⁴³ Porph. *De antr. nymph.* 6, 17, 20, 24; Turcan (1975) 62. Porph. *Abst.* 2.56.3, 4.16 (a quotation from Pallas).

⁴⁴ I do not see the continuity from Plutarch to Porphyry perceived by Brisson (2004) 80–86.

same truth philosophy is striving for. Religions may well—as Plutarch’s exegesis of the Egyptian cult and myth of Isis shows—contain, in veiled language, a full exposition of the metaphysical structure of the world. As far as the truth is concerned, religions and philosophy are on a par. Neoplatonism, on the other hand, self-consciously transcends local religions by positing itself as the supreme religion; philosophy contains a higher degree of truth than local religions. In *De abstinentia*, Porphyry styles the philosopher ‘priest of the supreme god’,⁴⁵ a higher kind of priest than the priests of the lesser gods, more elevated than those serving the traditional deities:

Εἰκότως ἄρα ὁ φιλόσοφος καὶ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἱερεὺς πάσης ἀπέχεται ἐμψύχου βορᾶς, μόνος μόνῳ διὰ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ θεῷ προσιέναι σπουδάζων ἄνευ τῆς τῶν παρομαρτούντων ἐνοχλήσεως, καὶ ἔστιν εὐλαβὴς τὰς τῆς φύσεως ἀνάγκης ἐξιστορηκώς. Ἴστωρ γὰρ πολλῶν ὁ ὄντως φιλόσοφος καὶ σημειωτικὸς καὶ καταληπτικὸς τῶν τῆς φύσεως πραγμάτων καὶ συνετὸς καὶ κόσμιος καὶ μέτριος, πανταχόθεν σφάζων ἑαυτόν. Καὶ ὥσπερ ὁ τινος τῶν κατὰ μέρος <θεῶν> ἱερεὺς ἔμπειρος τῆς ἰδρύσεως τῶν ἀγαλμάτων αὐτοῦ τῶν τε ὀργιασμῶν καὶ τελετῶν καθάρσεων τε καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων, οὕτως ὁ τοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεοῦ ἱερεὺς ἔμπειρος τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀγαλματοποιίας καθάρσεων τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων δι’ ὧν συνάπτεται τῷ θεῷ.

So the philosopher, priest of the god who rules all, reasonably abstains from all animate food, working to approach the god, alone to alone, by his own effort, without disruption from an entourage, and he is wary because he has fully investigated the necessities of nature. The real philosopher has knowledge of many things: he notes signs, he understands the facts of nature, he is intelligent and orderly and moderate, protecting himself in all respects. And just as a priest of one of the particular gods is expert in setting up cult-statues of this god,⁴⁶ and in his rites and initiations and purifications and the like, so the priest of the god who rules all is expert in the making of his cult-statue and in purifications and the other rites by which he is linked to the god. (2.49 tr. G. Clark)

In this passage, possibly inspired by the thoughts and vocabulary of Plotinus, the neoplatonist philosopher elevates himself above all particular expressions of religion.⁴⁷ In Porphyry’s mind, all the different

⁴⁵ Porph. *Abst.* 2.49. See also Porph. *Letter to Marcella* 16.

⁴⁶ Bouffartigue and Patillon (1979) 114 read αὐτοῦ (of the philosopher himself). Clark (2000) 159 prefers αὐτοῦ (statue of this god). I follow her, as it is the most logical meaning of the text.

⁴⁷ Plotinus *Enn.* 1.6.7.9, 1.6.9.13, 6.7.34.7, 6.9.11.50. See Bouffartigue and Patillon (1979) 48–49, nuanced by Clark (2000) 159.

religions contain a grain of wisdom, but only philosophy the full truth.⁴⁸ This quotation is also instructive on the role of the mysteries, showing these as a particular element of religion, which can only aspire to lower truths. Moreover, it may be incidental, but it seems highly indicative to me, that in this quotation *orgiasmoi* and *teletai* are quoted after the setting up of statues, whereas in the quotations of Numenius and Plutarch, statues merit no mention. Indeed, Porphyry's philosophy of religion centred on statues (*On Statues* and *Letter to Anebo*) and oracles (*On the Philosophy from Oracles*), and not on mysteries.⁴⁹

The transcendence of one particular religion by the philosopher became a dominant theme of late antique Neoplatonism. Of Proclus it is said by his biographer Marinus: 'that he observed with the proper rituals the significant holidays of every people and the ancestral rites of each', but also that he considered himself 'the common priest of the entire world'.⁵⁰ It is a lack of modesty never found among Middle-Platonists. Middle-Platonism is certainly distinguished by its interest in and valuation of traditional religions, but it did not claim to be a religion itself. Neoplatonism, by contrast, was a religion pretending to transcend all local religions.

Whatever the general importance of Porphyry for the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, Eusebius' work clearly contains more philosophical layers than only the Porphyrian one; in particular, the role attributed to the mystery cults by the Bishop of Caesarea goes back to Middle Platonism and cannot be traced to Porphyry.

CONCLUSION

It is time to make our way back to Eusebius and the concept of paganism. Although Eusebius' portrayal of Greek religion is certainly a disfiguration of what it really was, his concept is rooted in a dialectical relationship with earlier philosophical thought. Already the Middle-Platonists saw religion as a coherent entity with certain essential characteristics. They affirmed the essential identity of all religions and

⁴⁸ Schott (2005) 299–300.

⁴⁹ Note that an important topic of Early Imperial religious thought was whether statues were useful in religion or not: cf. Maximus of Tyre *Or.* 2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.

⁵⁰ Marinus *Vita Procli* 19 (transl. Edwards (2000) 87).

identified the mystery cults as loci of truth: in them the most truthful exposition about the nature of the gods could be found. Eusebius, who had read the key thinkers of that age, incorporated both these characteristics in his definition of Greek religion. I do not wish to deny the impact of other factors on Eusebius' concept of paganism, be it Porphyrian polemic or Christian stereotypes, but they alone do not suffice to explain the specific definition the Bishop of Caesarea gives of 'paganism', which has its roots in the Middle-Platonic reflection of religion.

Although Eusebius at times simply copied passages from Middle-Platonists, he did not blindly copy their ideas. In his polemical recreation of paganism, the precise philosophical 'Sitz im Leben' of these earlier ideas is lost, especially the mystery cults' function in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* as a sort of fossil, rather than a living element of current paganism. Although constantly present in Eusebius' definition of Greek religion, they hardly play any role at all in the work, not even in a negative way as the object of a sustained polemic effort. This is best explained by seeing the mystery cults as the old disaffected corner stones of Middle-Platonic ideas about religions, which Eusebius stumbled across. With hardly any idea of their original function, he relocated them and used them for his own construction of paganism. Only now and then does he offer us a glimpse of their original importance in Early Imperial philosophy.

The deconstruction of Eusebius' definition has also shown that some of the received truths about paganism may need correction. The idea that the religions of the Mediterranean formed a unity and shared essential characteristics did not originate in Late Antiquity under the pressure of Christianity, but goes back to at least Early Imperial philosophy of religion. Paganism is also not a purely polemical Christian construct: the creation of paganism is a dialectical process, which started in ancient philosophy and later developed through interaction with Christian apologists like Eusebius. Rather than seeing the concept of 'paganism' as a pure invention by Christians, which only enters in a dialectical relation with the pagans themselves in Late Antiquity, we must consider it as an essentially dialectical concept, shaped and reshaped in philosophical and (more often) polemical discussion on the nature of 'Greek religion'.

A last and, in the context of a volume on archaeology, a most pressing consideration arises: is the development of ancient thought about

religion of any use for those studying ancient religions—apart from giving some justification for the use of old and sometimes despised concepts like paganism? Two examples can illustrate the possible interest of what I have argued. Recently, James Rives has argued that the Decree of Decius of A.D. 250, ordering a universal sacrifice to the traditional gods, is an indication of a newly born ‘religion of empire’ which was overarching, and to a certain extent superseding the local religions.⁵¹ It is a development one can understand in the context of philosophical thought, which tended to stress more and more the fundamental unity of all religions. Philosophy does not explain Decius, but at least shows that similar ideas developed at the same time in various areas of Roman society.

The idea that all religions are manifestations of the same essence, may also account for the accumulation of different religious offices by some prominent late antique pagans like Praetextatus, who were initiated into many different traditional and oriental mystery cults and priesthoods of various divinities.⁵² This fact has long puzzled scholars, with, for example, W. Liebeschuetz explaining it as personal syncretism.⁵³ Although more prosaic explanations must be considered as well, like a possible shortage of candidates for these priesthoods, it may be rather that behind this accumulation of office is the more general belief that all these different religions are fundamentally identical, rendering Praetextatus’ actions not a personal expression, but a reflection of a general train of thought in his age. One should note indeed that in Macrobius’ first book of the *Saturnalia*, Praetextatus defends a solar monotheism, to which all other gods can be reduced. In the light of the previous conclusions, the contradiction between Praetextatus’ real attitude and that ascribed to him in the *Saturnalia* may only be superficial. These examples suggest that the study of the concept of religion may yield explanations for change we witness in religious practice, but much more work needs to be done before we can establish this link firmly.

⁵¹ Rives (1999).

⁵² Dessau, *ILS* 1259. Cf. Liebeschuetz (1999).

⁵³ Liebeschuetz (1999) 203–204.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PE = Libanius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*
 DE = Libanius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*
 ILCV = *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, ed. E. Diehl, 4 vols. (Berlin 1961–67).

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LATE ANTIQUE PAGANISM: ADAPTATION UNDER DURESS

Béatrice Caseau

Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which worshippers of the old gods adapted to the new world order of the 4th c. Roman empire, where emperors, through various pronouncements, consistently attacked elements of their religious infrastructure and rituals. This included forbidding divination sacrifices, temple funding, and eventually led to the temples' definitive closure. This led to a privatisation of pagan worship and then to secrecy, a process difficult to detect in the archaeological record.

INTRODUCTION

For worshippers of the traditional gods, there was a marked difference between the early 4th c. and the two centuries which followed. During this time, the Christianisation of society had taken place in many regions around the Mediterranean. Social pressure was exerted on those who remained faithful to the gods of their ancestors, while conversion to the Christian faith was presented as a preferable option. The traditional cults lost their financial means and the support of the imperial government. The imperial constitutions of the 4th and 5th centuries talked about the pagan cults in contemptuous terms, calling them *superstitio* or *insania*.¹ The transition from a world where the majority of the population worshipped the gods to a world where the Christian faith was shared by most of the population has long been a subject of interest for scholars. My ambition here is more limited. I will simply try to evaluate how worshippers of the traditional cults adapted to the limitations imposed on their rituals, and eventually on their whole religious life.

¹ Belayche (2009); Salzman (1987).

Early medievalists tend to write about ‘paganism’ of the 7th and 8th c. as if it was intrinsically similar to the cults of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In doing so, they miss the transformation that the traditional cults underwent, as radical, at least in cities, as the transformation of Judaism after the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem. The first major transformation was caused by the limits imposed on sacrifices. The first target of the Christian emperors was private, domestic sacrifices and divination practices, with the ban on sacrifices later being extended to all forms of sacrifice. The second major change is linked to the financial impoverishment of the cults: even if traditional festivals are still mentioned in the 5th c. sources, temples were closed and funds to celebrate the deities were drying up, signifying the ending of processions and banquets. Finally, the imperial constitutions banned from the public sphere all forms of worship to the gods, including prayer. Although the imperial government had no means to control prayers and furtive sacrifices, social pressure led to a privatisation and spiritualisation of worship. Those who still worshipped the deities in the 6th c. did so quietly and in a very different manner than their ancestors.

SACRIFICE AND DIVINATION: THE FIRST CHRISTIAN EMPEROR, CONSTANTINE

Sacrifice was at the core of the relations between the faithful and the traditional deities; it was the duty of a devotee to offer sacrifices to honour them.² Although the regulation of cults and sacrifices had taken place earlier in the history of the Roman empire, a real change took place with the ban on sacrifices, which started during the reign of Constantine. There is, however, a debate as to how extensive the ban on sacrifices actually was and Constantine’s own attitude towards the practice.³ Some follow Eusebius of Caesarea and the constitution of A.D. 341 to argue that Constantine, repulsed by blood sacrifices, tried to curb the religious freedom of those who offered private sacrifices.⁴ Others consider that Constantine issued constitutions limiting only specific types of sacrifices.⁵ The constitution of 341 bans sacrifices

² Beard (1998), Stroumsa (2005).

³ Bradbury (1994), Brown (1998), Curran (2000), Henig (2006), Lee (2006).

⁴ Barnes (1981).

⁵ Delmaire (2004) 319–34.

and refers to a previous constitution of Constantine also forbidding sacrifices:

Superstition shall cease; the madness of sacrifices shall be abolished. For if any man in violation of the law of the sainted emperor our father, and in violation of this command of our clemency, should dare to perform sacrifices, he shall suffer the infliction of a suitable punishment and the effect of an immediate sentence.⁶

What was this law of Constantine? It has not been copied in book 16 of the Theodosian Code, but it may have been recorded in book 9, where, under the name of Constantine, we can read two texts quite similar in content. One of them is dated to A.D. 319:

...we prohibit soothsayers and priests and those persons who are accustomed to minister to such ceremonies to approach a private home or to cross the threshold of another person under the pretext of friendship. We have provided punishment against them if they should disregard this statute. But you, who think that this art is advantageous to you, go to the public altars and shrines and celebrate the rites of your custom; for we do not prohibit the ceremonies of a bygone perversion to be conducted openly.⁷

This text is very enlightening as to the concerns of Constantine. It is clear that he disapproved of the ancient ways and used derogatory terms to talk about divinatory practices.⁸ His real concern, however, was to curb secret rituals. He forbade the private consultation of soothsayers, because he feared the political implications of such consultations. He wanted to stop anyone from spreading the name of his possible successor, or the length of his own reign. He did not want bad omens to destabilise his reign.

Thus Constantine's first decisions on pagan rituals had a political motivation, and as such were not remotely innovative. The first Christian emperor was simply updating decisions taken by previous emperors, such as those taken by Tiberius against private consultation of soothsayers, some three centuries earlier.⁹ This reassertion of control over private *μαντικὴ* was nevertheless significant. Provided the law could be applied, it could have consequences on the religious life

⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16.9.3.

⁷ *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.2.

⁸ Matthews (2000); Cascau (2007).

⁹ *Suct. Tib.* 36.2; Cramer (1996).

of the elite, whose members could threaten the emperor. If accused of illegal ritual practices, the consequences could be dire.¹⁰ To outlaw the private consultation of soothsayers also required forbidding private sacrifices. In Roman religion, an examination of the entrails followed animal sacrifices, while augurs and *haruspices* studied and interpreted omens and signs.¹¹ Propitiatory sacrifices and consultatory sacrifices formed two types of sacrifice. Private sacrifices were often consultatory. Once you had killed an animal in a ritual way, as a sacrifice, it was tempting to ask for information on the future as well. As a result, divination was extremely popular amongst those who practised private sacrifices.

So, after Constantine had forbidden the private consultation of diviners, it was logical that the following year, in 320, he should also forbid domestic sacrifices, with a few exceptions for public buildings:

If it should appear that any part of Our palace or any other public work has been struck by lightning, the observance of the ancient custom shall be retained, and inquiry shall be made of the soothsayers as to the portent thereof. Written records thereof shall be very carefully collected and referred to Our Wisdom. Permission shall be granted to all other persons also to appropriate this custom to themselves, provided only that they abstain from domestic sacrifices, which are specifically prohibited.¹²

Surveillance of his subjects was the main concern of Constantine. He himself did not object to the consultation of soothsayers in case of disaster, only their involvement in political matters. He was especially careful to forbid sacrifices to those in charge of provincial government, as Eusebius notes in the *Vita Constantini*: 'The emperor went on to take practical steps. He first sent governors to the peoples in their various provinces, for the most part men consecrated to the saving faith. Those who preferred paganism, he forbade to sacrifice'.¹³ If one was part of the imperial government or its retinue, refraining from consulting oracles and offering private sacrifices was the safest course of action. Some scholars consider that conversion to Christianity was sometimes rooted in fear. The rhetoric of extreme violence against his

¹⁰ Harries (1999); Caseau (2010).

¹¹ Bouché-Leclercq (2003).

¹² *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.1.

¹³ Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 2.44 (transl. Cameron and Hall (1999) 110).

former religion by the recently converted astrologer Firmicus Maternus is often argued to be a deceit in order to ensure his own safety.¹⁴

Eusebius also asserts that Constantine wrote a law strictly forbidding sacrifices: 'One restricted the pollutions of idolatry which had for a long time been practised in every city and country district, so that no one should presume to set up cult objects, or practise divination or other occult arts, or even to sacrifice at all'.¹⁵ We have, however, no text banning all sacrifices signed by Constantine, and Eusebius' assertion has been debated by scholars. Eusebius draws the portrait of an ideal Christian emperor and tends to erase or modify what took place when it does not fit with his notion of a Christian ruler. It is possible Eusebius wanted to present Constantine as a thoroughly Christian emperor battling with idolatry, and so extended the scope of his interdiction on divinatory sacrifices to all sacrifices. Yet it is unlikely that Constantine banned all forms of sacrifice.¹⁶ It does not fit with the rest of the sources on the subject.¹⁷ Constantine did not object to public sacrifices, even if he did not himself take part in them.¹⁸ In all likelihood, for example, the foundation rites of Constantinople in 324 and in 330 included traditional sacrifices.¹⁹

The first constitutions limiting pagan ritual all go in the same direction. They intend to make sure that no political divination is practised by imperial officials or by the imperial retinue. Thus, nocturnal sacrifices, rites practised in secret or in the home were all forbidden, so that they could not be followed by divinatory consultations. Constantine meant to abolish private sacrifices and only allow sacrifices performed in the open air, on the altars of public temples. It is difficult to measure the impact of such decisions. It was an intrusion in the private customs of worshippers, but it was in line with previous imperial legislation and it did not disrupt the official rites of the traditional cults, as Libanius noted.²⁰ To limit pagan practices to public or open air rituals left intact the religious basis of state ceremonies, including unthreatening practices elsewhere.

¹⁴ Turcan (1982).

¹⁵ Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 2.45 (transl. Cameron and Hall (1999) 110–11).

¹⁶ Kofsky (2000); Cameron and Hall (1999).

¹⁷ Lee (2006) 173.

¹⁸ Curran (2000); Barnes (1981).

¹⁹ Philostorgios 2.17; Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 1.17; Dagron (1974) 41–42.

²⁰ Wiemer (1994) 511–24; Lib., *Oratio* 30.6.

The Constantinian laws forbidding private sacrifices and divination targeted only the higher echelons of late antique society, those members of the elite who could be a threat to the emperor and benefit from his fall. Those under scrutiny belonged to the army or to the administration and the imperial court. They now risked exile or their life if they consulted soothsayers in private. These laws had little impact on the rural or urban poor, who, in any case, seldom sacrificed an animal at home. The impact was thus limited in social terms but still important, because the law had the potential to be used at any time against anyone. It was a threat. It soon became a more profound one when Constantius became emperor.²¹ The same fear and obsession about the political implications of some types of sacrifices are detectable in Constantius' constitutions.

Constantius forbade oracles in 357 and promised capital punishment to those who ignored his ruling:

No person shall consult a soothsayer or an astrologer or a diviner. The wicked doctrines of augurs and seers shall become silent. The Chaldeans and wizards and all the rest whom the common people call magicians, because of the magnitude of their crimes, shall not attempt anything in this direction. The inquisitiveness of all men for divination shall cease forever. For if any person should deny obedience to these orders, he shall suffer capital punishment, felled by the avenging sword.²²

Another constitution of Constantius dated to 357, is very revealing:

If any wizard or person imbued with magical contamination who is called by the custom of the people a magician, a soothsayer, a diviner, or at any rate an augur, or even an astrologer, or one who conceals some art of divination by interpreting dreams, or at any rate, one who practices any similar art, should be apprehended in My Retinue or in that of the Caesar, he shall not escape punishment or torture by the protection of his high rank. If he should be convicted of his own crime and by denial should oppose those who reveal it, he shall be delivered to the torture horse, iron claws shall tear his sides, and he shall suffer punishment worthy of his crime.²³

Here again, it is important to note that the accusations touched the higher strata of society and not the ordinary worshippers. In the long run, however, the grouping of magicians with the traditional diviners

²¹ Barnes (1989) 322–37; Mathews (1989).

²² *Cod. Theod.* 16.16.4.

²³ *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.6.

and augurs had side-effects. It meant that traditional priesthoods were not safe from possible accusations. Their private cultic practices could be construed as magical practices, and fall under the strictest of laws. Pagan practices and magical practices eventually came to be seen as the same thing, and were condemned under the same heading in the 6th and 7th centuries.²⁴

In the time of Constantius, measures against pagan rituals were stricter and here I must disagree with Roland Delmaire, who asserts that Constantius did not ban all sacrifices, and simply kept his father's rulings on the question of private sacrifices.²⁵ The constitution sent to Taurus, the praetorian prefect, is not ambiguous:

It is our pleasure that the temples shall be immediately closed in all places and in all cities, and access to them forbidden, so as to deny to all abandoned men the opportunity to commit sin. It is also our will that all men shall abstain from sacrifices. But if perchance any man should perpetrate any such criminality, he shall be struck down with the avenging sword.²⁶

In this case, public sacrifices as well as private ones are targeted. The constitution means to prevent 'all men' from performing sacrifices.

An even harsher ruling was issued at Milan in A.D. 356 and subjected to capital punishment those who devoted their attention to sacrifices or worshipped images. Delmaire argues that since sacrifices continued to be performed, so the laws could not have banned all kinds of sacrifices. This rather overstates the power of the law; the fact that a law is not obeyed or respected does not mean it does not exist. A general ban on sacrifices was very difficult to implement. The application of a law depended on the goodwill of local authorities. Many of them were worshippers of the gods and had no inclination to close the temples, if they could avoid it, and did not investigate domestic sacrifices. Here again, we know that sacrifices were performed long after the law was promulgated, but we have no way to assess how many temples were closed, following Constantius' order, nor how many sacrifices ceased to be offered for fear of the law.

Yet, reading Ammianus Marcellinus, we understand that the threat imposed on the worshippers of the gods increased during the reign

²⁴ Vakaloudi (2000); Vakaloudi (2001); Graf (2004).

²⁵ Delmaire (2004) 327.

²⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.4.

of Constantius, even if the infractions were not followed with actual sentencing each time.²⁷ During trials, people's intentions were analysed. For example, Ammianus tells us about a Demetrius, surnamed Cythras, a philosopher of advanced years:

...being charged with offering sacrifice several times, he could not deny it; he declared, however, that he had done so from early youth for the purpose of propitiating the deity, not of trying a higher station by his investigations. [...] He was allowed to go without further harm to his native city of Alexandria.

The religious agenda of Constantius regarding sacrifices was different from his father's. Constantine, had no kind words for public sacrifices and felt an intense disgust for them, but he preferred public sacrifices under public scrutiny to secret private sacrifices. The reign of Constantius marks a turning-point. Like his father, he forbade secret sacrifices, but he went further. He threatened with death those who offered sacrifices and honoured statues (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.6. (A.D. 356). He forbade entering temples and ordered them closed. R. Delmaire thinks he meant to close only the buildings and keep open the access to the altar located outside of the temple, with the idea that no one could offer secret sacrifices inside temples. Yet the law orders that all men 'abstain from sacrifices'. It does not command them to abstain from sacrifices inside temples. We have testimonies concerning actual sacrifices after the laws were promulgated, but that does not mean that the intent of the law was limited to specific sacrifices. It indicates only that it was difficult to enforce legislation which went against well-entrenched traditions. Both the laws and historical narratives from this period reveal that it had become necessary for worshippers of the gods to change their ways. By the end of Constantius' reign, the temples were officially closed, even public sacrifices were no longer welcome, and as suspicion arose among courtiers, the situation for high-ranking officials who worshipped the gods must have been made more difficult. Ammianus Marcellinus reports:

If anyone consulted a soothsayer about the squeaking of a field mouse, or about the meeting with a weasel on the way, or any like portent, or used some old wife's charm to relieve pain (a thing which even medical authority allows), he was indicted (from what source he could not guess), was hailed into court, and suffered the death penalty.²⁸

²⁷ Amm. Marc. 19.12.12 (transl. Rolfe (1935) 541).

²⁸ Amm. Marc. 16.8.2.

This is also the period during which we hear of the first private attacks against temples. Some bishops, such as George of Alexandria (357–61), tried to uphold the law forbidding sacrifices and curbing popular participation in traditional festivals. He was not a favourite among pagans as a result.²⁹ There is no doubt that the rise to power of Julian and his wish to restore the traditional cults must have allowed many pagans to breathe more easily.³⁰ They were now encouraged to visit the shrines and to perform sacrifices.³¹ Julian's program to restore the temples, to create a clerical hierarchy, and his wish to feed the poor were all products from his Christian upbringing.³² One scholar even wrote that Julian wanted to create a pagan Church.³³ However, his reign did not last long enough for his programme to become reality. His successors were all Christians and soon started to issue statements forbidding once more what Julian had allowed. The post-Julianic emperors shared the same concerns of the first Christian emperors. They feared secret rites, nocturnal sacrifices and the magical practices of the elite. In the 350s and again in the 370s, a number of people, some belonging to the senatorial order, were accused of taking part in magical practices.³⁴ Anti-magical laws had more popular support, and allowed even high ranking officials to be sentenced to death.³⁵

We can conclude from this brief survey that the first changes imposed on paganism by the 4th century Christian emperors led to a strict limitation of private and domestic sacrificial ritual. If you were prominent in society, and had made enemies at court, it was unsafe to consult oracles or to organise sacrifices at home, it was also unsafe to keep certain books or even to offer a banquet for the festival of a god. An insidious threat was created by these constitutions. Libanius recalls that around the year 340 he had met a brave man who had chosen to ignore these laws, even though this could mean the death penalty.³⁶ Eunapius also recalls the difficult period of the 370s, when the laws were used against a number of persons, accused of practising magic or of plotting against the emperor but he admits that oracles were indeed used with a political motivation in mind. The theurgist Maximus of

²⁹ Haas (1997) 287–93; Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 4.30.

³⁰ Bowersock (1980); Bouffartigue (1992).

³¹ Belayche (2001) 457–86.

³² Smith (1995).

³³ Bouffartigue (1992); Athanassiadi (1992), Chuvin (2009).

³⁴ Lenski (2002).

³⁵ Clerc (1995).

³⁶ Lib. *Or.* 1.27.

Ephesus, for example, died after he had agreed to reveal the meaning of an oracle:

By putting his mind on the oracle and closely observing what it said, he quickly saw the hidden sense of the words, that is the truth itself. [...] He said: "After a general and multiform slaughter of all men, in which we shall be the victims of the massacre, the emperor will die a strange death, and will not be given burial or the honour of a tomb".³⁷

There is no doubt that when Valens heard of such an oracle, he had no reason to rejoice and many reasons to punish those who had promoted it and made it public, which is indeed what happened. The conspirators were sentenced to death, and were 'beheaded like hens at some banquet', to use the words of Eunapius. Eunapius had no qualms about such a punishment, if a plot was proven. He did, however, condemn the indiscriminate sentencing of innocent people, based on their religious inclination towards the traditional cults.³⁸

All this had little impact on the rural population, who continued to worship the gods in the traditional ways. It mainly affected the elite and urban dwellers. It certainly upset the financial resources of sanctuaries famous for their oracular practices. It also curbed the sacrifices and religious festivals in many cities (albeit with regional discrepancies). For the elite, remaining a worshipper of the gods rather than converting to Christianity was still possible but it demanded cautiousness in ritual practices.

THE IMPOVERISHMENT OF CULTS

The second important change to the traditional cults had, conversely, an impact on almost all worshippers of the gods. The financial impoverishment of the cults, now no longer publicly funded, affected a cult's ability to offer banquets and sacrifices, but also to repair its buildings. In the 3rd c., pagan festivals, marked by colourful processions, sacrifices and banquets, took place at regular intervals, especially in prosperous cities. When the city authorities in Alexandria heard in A.D. 215 that Caracalla was to visit the city, large public sacrifices

³⁷ Eunap. *VS* (transl. Wright (1921, repr. 1998) 456–57).

³⁸ Eunap. *VS* (transl. Wright (1921, repr. 1998) 457–59).

were organised for the reception of the emperor. Herodian describes the event:

All kinds of musical instruments were set up everywhere and produced a variety of sounds. Clouds of perfume and incense of all sorts presented a sweet odour at the city gates. As soon as Antoninus entered the city with his whole army, he went up to the temple, where he made a large number of sacrifices and laid quantities of incense on the altars.³⁹

A few years later, in 220–21, when Elagabalus imported to Rome the cult of the Syrian god El-Gabal, he organised a majestic procession that he led himself. Here again, Herodian describes the scene: ‘Along both sides of the route the people ran with a great array of torches, showering wreaths and flowers on him’.⁴⁰ In the new temple on the Palatine he had built to worship the god, many altars were set up to offer daily sacrifices. There, at the steps leading to the altars, garlanded calves waited to be sacrificed. Each day, recalls Herodian, Elagabalus: ‘slaughtered a hecatomb of cattle and a large number of sheep which were placed upon the altars and loaded with every variety of spices’.⁴¹ Wine was poured in with the blood of the victims. Syrian women danced to the sounds of many different instruments, circling the altars with cymbals and drums in their hands.

Naturally, the presence of the emperor accounts for the splendour of the ceremonies. Yet, they contrast starkly with what took place in the later 4th c. The Romans were proud of their temples and of their religious ceremonies. It was felt that by respecting the rules of a precise ritual, their sacrifices would be acceptable to the gods.⁴² They also enjoyed the aesthetic elements of these ceremonies. We can find an echo of these feelings in ancient poetry. Ovid, for example, describes the visual and acoustic effects of incense and spices burning in the temples:

Dost mark how the sky sparkles with fragrant fires, and how Cilician saffron crackles on the kindled hearths? The flame with its own splendour beats upon the temples’ gold and spreads a flickering radiance on the hallowed roof.⁴³

³⁹ Herodian, 4.8.7–8.

⁴⁰ Herodian, 5.6.8.

⁴¹ Herodian, 5.5.8.

⁴² Scheid (1985; 1998).

⁴³ Ov. *Fast.* 1.75–78 (transl. J. G. Frazer (1951) 8–9).

This aesthetic aspect of pagan cult ritual did not escape the criticism of the Christian, Lactantius, who reproved the childishness of men who bring perfumes, gold and beautiful clothes to the statues as if they were dolls, and who measure the power of a god, according to the beauty of its statue and temple.⁴⁴ This gives us a vivid picture of what such ceremonies were like, but by Late Antiquity paganism had changed. It is extremely frustrating to read scholars of the Early Middle Ages make comments on the continuity of pagan practices as if nothing had changed from the 2nd c. until their own period of study in the 7th or 8th c. Comparing the poor offerings to a spring by some Early Medieval peasants to these elaborate processions and rituals shows how much Christian apologists and bishops have had their way in defining paganism. Even by the 3rd c., 'paganism' was changing.

The most important transformation came as a result of financial difficulties. This may have started already in the 3rd c. for a number of cults that were losing popularity.⁴⁵ It is clear that economic difficulties and civil wars had an impact on the cults; the number of sacrifices performed and the lavishness of processions and banquets, all depended on the level of wealth of the cities or of the state subsidising them. Still, this possible drop in the number of sacrifices was only small compared to their decline in the 4th c., in many regions.

One of the first measures Constantine took concerning the temples was to confiscate their treasures and redirect the money to his own Christianising programme. He also sent envoys to the ancient sanctuaries with orders to bring back any precious metal they could gather. Years later, Libanius noted that in the time of Constantine all the rituals could still be fulfilled, but the temples were poor.⁴⁶ Apparently, they never quite recovered from these confiscations. Their wealth substantially dropped almost overnight, but further financial difficulties were ahead.

Some cities, already converted to the Christian faith, decided to withdraw their financial support for some or all of the public cults and games. For example, the little city of Orcistus asked Constantine to be freed from the obligation to pay for sacrifices, and its wish was

⁴⁴ Lactant. *Div. inst.* 2.4.15.

⁴⁵ Dijkstra (2008) gives examples of disaffection towards temples in the region of Philae.

⁴⁶ Lib. *Or.* 30.6.

granted.⁴⁷ Naturally, this was not the case everywhere, some cities such as Gaza were still very much in favour of subsidising their local temples, but it was the start of a trend towards the replacement of public funding with private funding for the cultic festivals.⁴⁸ This whole tradition of sociability and public rejoicing was slowly ebbing away as processions and banquets lost some of their splendour. The general trend was for a slow but visible fall in state financial support for cult activities, which became even more pronounced when temple lands were confiscated.⁴⁹ As soon as Julian was dead, temple lands, which had been confiscated and then given back to the temples by Julian, were again seized under Valentinian. A law addressed to the praetorian prefect Mamertinus orders:

All property which was transferred from Our patrimony and placed in possession of temples by the authority of the emperor Julian of sainted memory, We order to be restored with full legal title to Our privy purse, through the offices of Your serenity.⁵⁰

Another constitution, also dated to 364, and published in Milan, states:

It is our pleasure that all parcels of land and all landed estates which are now the property of temples and which have been sold or donated by various emperors shall be reclaimed and added to our private patrimony.⁵¹

Temple lands had provided funding not only for ceremonies and sacrifices but also for the upkeep of the buildings. Their loss meant that temples suffering material decay would have had great difficulty in finding the money to make the necessary repairs. This impoverishment may have had more impact on small village temples than on grand sanctuaries. Some temples, such as the Alexandrian Serapeion or the Gazean Marneion, were famous enough to attract visitors and probably generous donors, if necessary. Other more ordinary temples may not have benefited from such local attachment. In a way, this was not new.

⁴⁷ Chastagnol (1981) 381–416; Mitchell (1998) 52–73.

⁴⁸ Gaza: Sivan (2008); Belayche (2004) 5–22.

⁴⁹ Delmaire (1989) 641.

⁵⁰ *Cod. Theod.* 5.13.2.

⁵¹ *Cod. Theod.* 10.1.8.

It would be wrong to imagine that all the cults flourished in the early 4th c. and that all the temples were in a perfect state of maintenance. Some temples had numerous devotees; other temples attracted few or none. Their popularity may have climaxed in an earlier period and plummeted after that. So it is important not to draw systematic conclusions from a derelict temple in the 3rd and early 4th c. At any period of time, some religious buildings were in a better state of repair than others, without it being the result of Christian imperial policies. A study of mithraic shrines offers interesting conclusions in this respect.⁵² This private cult had many abandoned cult sites already in the 3rd c., and some more in the 4th. A derelict temple or a declining cult is no indication that other cults follow the same pattern. Equally, in Egypt, numerous pharaonic temples were standing thanks to their very solid construction methods, but were no longer acting as religious centres.⁵³ Local studies reveal the great discrepancy between derelict temples and proudly well-maintained temples that were visited, repaired and adorned throughout the 4th c.

With the confiscation of temple lands, however, a new, more sombre period for temples began. Epigraphic attestation for repairs dwindled, even for private temples, although we still have to account for regional differences.⁵⁴ The general picture, however, for the long 4th c. is a slow ebbing away of life and wealth from the temples. This meant less sacrifices, less flamboyant processions and meagre banquets, this also meant temples in disrepair and, in some cases, their complete abandonment. If I am allowed to make a comparison with later centuries, when the medieval Coptic Church experienced serious financial problems linked to arbitrary Islamic taxation, it started to abandon the buildings too costly to maintain and cut back on spending. It also asked church goers to bring with them sufficient money to give during mass so as to allow the *prosphora* to be offered, as even the simple offering of bread and wine for the Christian sacrifice had become a problem.⁵⁵ Something of a similar nature happened to temples and traditional cults in the 4th c. Finding funds to maintain buildings and pay for the sacrifices was no longer easy, even for well-known temples.

⁵² Sauer (1996).

⁵³ Bagnall (1993); Dijkstra (2008).

⁵⁴ Jouffroy (1986) and Lepelley (1979; 2002a) have studied the epigraphic evidence for such repairs in Africa and Italy.

⁵⁵ Périer (1914) 317.

Let us take just one example, that of the famous temple of Delphi, in a region where Christianisation was slow. It seems that this temple had to struggle in the 4th c. with money problems and part of it fell into disrepair, long before its official closing. The Temple of Apollo experienced a fire, which was followed by some kind of low quality repair, the dates for which are uncertain. The temple had either been deliberately set alight or had suffered from a natural disaster, which, fuelled with the many ex-votos inside the building, would have created a violent conflagration. Whether these events took place in the 3rd or the 4th c. is still debated.⁵⁶ Still, we have hints of the sanctuary's financial difficulties in the 4th c. An inscription reveals that in A.D. 342–44 a high priest of Apollo was still in charge at the site. He complains that some people are causing damage to the sanctuary, possibly Christians at Delphi. The name of the offending party is unfortunately lost.⁵⁷

In a fragment of Philostorgius' 'Ecclesiastical History' preserved in the 10th c. *Passio Artemii* and in a passage of the 12th c. Byzantine historian Kedrenos, we hear of an oracle supposedly offered to Julian's doctor Oribasius, and dealing with the fate of the temple. The oracle asks that the emperor be warned that the temple was falling apart and that the spring Kastalia no longer produced oracles.⁵⁸ It is likely that the temple was affected by Constantius' decision not to allow oracles. The fame of the oracle had brought wealth to the temple in the past. During the reign of Julian, the oracular tradition sprung back to life, but money was needed to restore the temple and make the cult thrive again.

Timothy Gregory, who has studied this particular oracle, suspects that it was written by the priests of Delphi in order to bring in money to repair the temple during the reign of Julian. Whether or not the oracle is authentic is open to question, but Pierre Amandry tends to think that it is a Christian forgery, written to claim the superiority of the Christian god over Apollo. Such faked oracles are known in Christian literature; it is more powerful if the demons claim to be defeated themselves.

If it is authentic and if it goes back to the time of Julian, it reveals that even the most famous temples experienced financial difficulties,

⁵⁶ Déroche (2005); Foschia (2000).

⁵⁷ Athanassiadi (1989–90).

⁵⁸ Philostorgius 7.1 (Bidez (1972)).

and it was hoped that Julian would do something to help them. He certainly intended to. We learn in Ammianus Marcellinus that Julian sent Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, as proconsul of Achaia, in order to restore temples and make the cults thrive again.⁵⁹ We have no indication, however, that Delphi received any special treatment. Julian's reign did not last long enough to transform his very ambitious plans for the revival of traditional cults into reality everywhere. In Greece, where no bishop or monk seems to have set out to damage the temples—unlike John Chrysostom in Phoenicia, or Barsauma in Syria—the sanctuaries simply decayed naturally over time.

When temples were damaged, it was extremely difficult to raise enough money to pay for the repairs, unless the temples were private and served the religious needs of a family. We have another example of a famous temple located in Aigai and facing difficulties after the damage done to its buildings under Constantine.⁶⁰ Constantine not only ordered the confiscation of precious objects from the temples in the East, but he also gave orders for the destruction of specific sanctuaries. Some of the temples Constantine chose to destroy were located on biblical sites, especially those marked by the passage of Christ on earth. Other temples were destroyed, either because they were offensive to the new standards of morality, like the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphaca in Phoenicia, where ritual prostitution was practised, or because they were a focus for anti-Christian polemic that had contributed to the persecution of Christians by previous emperors.⁶¹

The temple at Aegai in Cilicia falls into the second category. Dedicated to the 'saviour god' Aesculapius, a healing deity that was perceived as a dangerous competitor to Christ, its fame had been publicised in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. A pagan wonder-worker, Apollonius shared many features with Christ, including a 'godlike' ability to resurrect the dead, and he had been exalted as superior to Christ during the Great Persecution. The destruction ordered by Constantine did not eradicate the healing cult, but caused some damage to the temple itself. As a result, the faithful in search of a cure had to leave without the traditional nightly incubation in the temple. A priest was present under the reign of Julian, and, if Zonaras is well-informed,

⁵⁹ Amm. Marc. 22.76.

⁶⁰ Robert (1973).

⁶¹ Lane Fox (1989) 671–72.

the priest asked the apostate emperor to order the restitution of the columns of the temple, which the Christians had removed to build a church.⁶² If this is accurate, then it means that although the temple did not find the means to pay for repairs, it still attracted people hoping to be cured, as in the past.

FROM PUBLIC TO PRIVATE, AND FROM PUBLIC TO SECRET

For the pagan cults the worst was yet to come, with the Theodosian laws ordering the closing of the temples. While Constantine wanted to curb pagan practices involving divination or magic, and restrict pagan rituals to public events, his immediate successors and the emperors at the turn of the 4th c. and 5th c. wanted to see the end of public ritual practices as well. They pushed the followers of traditional cults out of the temple precincts. The natural consequence of these decisions was to eliminate the civic aspects of the cults, and most of their socially cohesive elements as well. Peace with the gods was no longer a state affair, nor a civic affair; it had become a private matter. This final transformation of 'paganism' is extremely important. It amounts to a complete privatisation of the traditional cults.

From 383 the Roman state no longer subsidised the cults. This decision took some time to become reality everywhere, if I understand well the constitution dated to 415, which was issued in Ravenna, but addressed to North Africa:

...all the places assigned by the false doctrine of the ancients to their sacred rituals shall be joined to the property of Our privy purse. Thus, now that public expenditure is prohibited to be furnished to the worst superstition, the fruits from such places shall be exacted from their unlawful possessors.⁶³

It seems that some of the temples in that region had kept their lands, or some sort of revenue stream. Were they cults to the emperors or to Rome? It is possible, but nothing in the text allows us to be so precise. We may find a confirmation of these temples continued financial health in the letter of a Christian landowner to Augustine, who reveals that pagan temples with food offerings were still common around 398

⁶² Robert (1973) 161–211, esp. 185–92.

⁶³ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.20.

in the countryside.⁶⁴ Fruit and vegetables, which came from temple lands or from land belonging to pagan priests, were still common in the markets.

The imperial constitutions were not automatically obeyed, yet they could not be completely ignored everywhere. The closer you were to the imperial court and to loyal officials, the more difficult it was to disobey completely. In 391 two constitutions, one issued in Milan, the other in Aquileia, but addressed to the Count of Egypt Evagrius, gave orders which were meant to finally put an end to all activity associated with the traditional cults:

No person shall pollute himself with sacrificial animals; no person shall slaughter an innocent victim; no person shall approach the shrines, shall wander through the temples, or revere the images done by mortal labour, lest he become guilty by divine and human laws.⁶⁵

These two texts target specifically imperial officers, judges and local officials who dared to enter a temple and perform a sacred rite for the gods. This was the official ending for all temple rituals for the ancient Graeco-Roman cults.

Judaism had experienced a similar trauma when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. It had to renounce practising the usual ritual sacrifices; its priests were no longer performing the ritual offerings and purifications. Here again though, we need to take into consideration the real diversity of the cults. For some their popularity had already waned and the closing of the temple was a simple formality. However, for the cults that were still thriving, for their adepts the closing of the temple was very damaging.

In Gaza, the Marneion was officially closed, but secret ceremonies and rituals still took place. In the Egyptian village of Menouthis, a secret temple was the setting for sacrifices up until 484, when Bishop Peter of Alexandria asked some Pachomian monks (those of the monastery of Tabennesiotes, located in Canope) to help him to destroy its idols.⁶⁶ The temple could not have maintained its activities without the complicity of the local, officially Christianised, population. In a room whose entrance was hidden behind a big cupboard, they found many Egyptian idols, some of them covered in blood. A former worshipper

⁶⁴ August. *Ep.* 46; Lepelley (2002b) 81–96.

⁶⁵ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10 and 11.

⁶⁶ Zac. Myt. *V. Sev.* (PO 2:27–32).

of the gods, who had converted to Christianity and suffered at the hands of his former co-religionists, had denounced the secret temple. The clue that gave the temple away was, seemingly, the stocking of too much incense, for a small house. When the monks moved the cupboards full of incense, they discovered the entrance to the hidden temple.

Secrecy became a habit for convinced devotees of the traditional cults, who wished to continue their rites without attracting attention.⁶⁷ As time went by, it had become less easy to assert one's religious preferences if you were pagan. People had to be cautious because overtly engaging in ritual practices could be dangerous. Those who wanted to keep the old ways, showed inventiveness, as we learn from many Christian sermons in the last centuries of Antiquity and in the Early Middle Ages, such as: offering small items on a turf altar, lighting lamps, offering incense, throwing coins in a spring and tying ribbons to a tree, for example. These gestures, recorded in the sermons of bishops such as Caesarius of Arles or in Church canons, reveal how worshippers adapted to the ending of formal city or state subsidised sacrifices. These private gestures and offerings to the gods were extremely difficult or even impossible to control. They are carefully listed in the Theodosian Code as forbidden practices, in a long constitution addressed, in 392, to Rufinus, praetorian prefect, and issued in Constantinople. It forbids all kinds of private ritual practices such as the following:

No person [...] shall sacrifice an innocent victim to senseless images in any place at all or in any city. He shall not by more secret wickedness, venerate his lar with fire, his genius with wine, his penates with fragrant odours; he shall not burn lights to them, place incense before them or suspend wreaths to them.⁶⁸

It also forbids binding a tree with fillets, to erect an altar of turf, and to make offerings to images of the gods. The punishment for carrying out these activities is the confiscation of one's house and properties: 'We decree that all places shall be annexed to Our fisc, if it is proved that they have reeked with the vapour of incense, provided, however, that such places are proved to have belonged to such incense burners'.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Caseau (2010).

⁶⁸ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12.

⁶⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12.

The text takes into account the diverse forms that many cults could take. In some regions such as northern Gaul, the worship of sacred trees mattered more to the local population than their Romanised temples.⁷⁰ Had the news of the imperial constitutions reached them, they would not have been concerned by the first set of imperial announcements, but greatly threatened by these final edicts. In an episode from the *Life of Saint Martin*, pagan villagers become enraged with Martin's attempts to cut down their sacred tree, whilst his destruction of their temple had met with silent acquiescence.⁷¹

The only solution left to those who knew the laws but wanted to resist them, was to search for remote places to continue practising their rituals. Sacred trees in deep forests and sacred caves took on an importance that they had not hitherto enjoyed when the temples were still functioning. We can note an increase in the descriptions of sacred trees in saints' lives of the 5th and 6th c., in regions where previously the main targets had been temples. In western Asia Minor, the abbot Hypatius (ca. 366–446), of the Rouphinianes monastery located south of Chalcedon, went on various expeditions to cut down sacred trees each time he heard of a new one.⁷² It seems that there was an increase in the use of natural sites by worshippers intent on carrying out sacrifices. Long-forgotten caves, once cultic sites, were visited again in the 5th and 6th c. According to Zacharias, in order to avoid Christian interference, pious pagans walked to remote places outside the city of Aphrodisias to perform forbidden sacrifices.⁷³

Archaeology confirms a renewed interest in ancient religious sites. Near Sparta a long abandoned hilltop shrine dedicated to Zeus Mesapeus was visited again during the 4th c., as hundreds of mould-made terracotta lamps have revealed.⁷⁴ Lamps dated to the 6th c. were deposited in great numbers in cave sites, such as Vari.⁷⁵ Nocturnal ceremonies would account for the lamps, but the interesting

⁷⁰ To give but two 6th c. examples, Cassiodorus explains that peasants in the region of Vivarium (south Italy) used to be attached to sacred trees, but now come to the church within his monastery: Cassiod. *Inst.* 1.32; Gregory the Great mentions tree and stone worshippers, the *Barbaricini*, coming from North Africa and living in Sardinia: Gregory *Ep.* 4.25 and 27; Judic (2002); Scheid (1993).

⁷¹ Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 12 (Sources Chrétiennes 133: 278–79).

⁷² *V. Hypatii*, 30 (ed. and French transl. G. J. M. Bartelink (1971) 201).

⁷³ Zac. *Myt. V. Sev.* (PO 2: 39–41—English transl. in Lee (2000) 134–35).

⁷⁴ Caseau (2004); Alcock (1994); Langdon (1976) 111.

⁷⁵ Weller (1903); Skias (1918).

fact is that these ceremonies took place at all. Who would risk being caught? Neoplatonic philosophers maintained sacrificial practices in Athens. The *Life of Proclus* by Marinus of Neapolis reveals that Proclus remained faithful to the gods, worshipped Pan and visited local shrines.⁷⁶ Families of Neoplatonic philosophers practised intermarriage and made sure not to marry Christians.⁷⁷ These people were consciously preserving the old ways the best they could. Yet, if they asked peasants about local temples and ancient cults, they may have been disappointed to face complete ignorance and indifference. Local peasants would offer grains to the earth for example; these gestures had little to do with the highly formalised rituals of their ancestors. Early Medieval bishops condemned such practices and gestures under a common name: pagan. These practices were, however, in all likelihood, reinvented several times rather than maintained without alteration throughout the centuries.⁷⁸

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⁷⁶ Marinus *Vita Procli*, 33 (Oikonomides (1977) 74–75); Fowden (1988) 57.

⁷⁷ Puech (2002); Tardieu (1990).

⁷⁸ Caesarius *Serm.* 53.1 (Sources Chrétiennes 243: 444).

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THE 'END' OF ROMAN SENATORIAL PAGANISM

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Abstract

The last decades of the 20th c. witnessed a seismic shift in how scholars approached the study of paganism in the increasingly Christian Roman Empire of the 4th and early 5th centuries. Older models which emphasised decline and conflict were challenged by a new awareness of the vitality and diversity of Late Roman paganism and its religious and social interaction with Christianity. The purpose of this short paper is to reassess the impact of this new scholarly approach, particularly upon our understanding of the paganism of the western senatorial elite, and the role that material culture has played and will continue to play in revealing the complex religious world of late antique Rome.¹

INTRODUCTION

That Roman paganism did in some sense 'decline' in the 4th and 5th centuries is impossible to dispute. The great State cults of the Roman Republic and the Early Roman Empire continued to receive State support from Constantine and his immediate Christian successors, but this support ceased under Gratian and Theodosius I at the end of the 4th c. In the same period, the Christian Church increased dramatically in numbers and in status, changing the urban landscape and raising to prominence a new elite of clerics and ascetics. By the death of Theodosius I in 395 Christianity had become the official religion of the State. Pagans and pagan beliefs survived, and remained a concern for Emperors down to Justinian in the 6th c. and beyond. But the Roman empire was now a Christian empire.

Such religious and social change could not occur without conflict. Even under the generally tolerant regime of Constantine a few select temples were destroyed and the legal status of paganism began to

¹ For the vast bibliography on paganism in Late Antiquity consult the bibliographic essay earlier in this volume.

come under attack. Further laws against pagan shrines and practices followed under Constantine's sons, but the death of Constantius in 361 led to the accession of the pagan Julian whose immediate Christian successors Jovian, Valentinian I and Valens took little action against established pagan cults. Tension increased significantly, however, in the final two decades of the 4th c. Temple destruction in the Greek East in the early 380s aroused the anger of the Antiochene sophist Libanius, but more important at an official level were the actions of Gratian, the young emperor in the West. In 382 Gratian was the first Christian emperor to reject the title of *pontifex maximus*, the chief priest of Roman State paganism. He withdrew the funding for pagan priesthoods, notably the Vestal Virgins, and he ordered the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Senate House which had previously been removed by Constantius but then restored. Upon Gratian's murder in 383, the efforts of the pagan senator Quintus Aurelius Symmachus to convince his young brother and successor Valentinian II to restore the Altar were defeated by the powerful bishop Ambrose of Milan. In 391–92 Theodosius I in the East passed a series of laws that systematically outlawed pagan cult, and 391 also saw the destruction of the great Serapeum of Alexandria. There was a short-lived revival of political support for pagan cults in Rome under the usurper Eugenius in 393–94, but at the Battle of the River Frigidus in September 394 Eugenius was defeated. His leading pagan senatorial supporter Virius Nicomachus Flavianus committed suicide, taking the cause of Roman State paganism to his grave.

This is the narrative that underlies the older vision of the 4th c. as an age of pagan decline and religious conflict. Paganism, it was argued, was already in decay during the 3rd c. and could not challenge the rise of Christianity. "In the fourth century paganism appears as a kind of living corpse, which begins to collapse from the moment when the supporting hand of the state is withdrawn from it".² The course of that collapse is then traced through the sequence of 'turning points' summarised above. Geffcken and Alföldi popularised this approach,³ and so perhaps most influentially did Herbert Bloch, who in two famous articles laid down the argument for a 'pagan revival' in the 380s and 390s that sought to reverse the inexorable collapse

² Dodds (1965) 132.

³ Geffcken (1920), Alföldi (1948, 1952).

of paganism since the conversion of Constantine.⁴ This movement, according to Bloch, was focused around the pagan Roman senatorial elite, led by Symmachus, Flavianus, and their mutual friend Vettius Agorius Praetextatus. The political involvement of Symmachus in the Altar of Victory Debate and Flavianus in the usurpation of Eugenius were doomed to failure. But through their revival of paganism they were credited with a new emphasis on classicizing art and literature that helped to preserve classical culture for future generations.

The initial influence of this model of religious conflict and pagan revival is difficult to exaggerate, but in the closing decades of the 20th c. it came under sustained attack from different directions.⁵ Art historians exposed the flaw in identifying classicizing art as evidence for a pagan revival, for Christian art too drew heavily on classical artistic traditions. The choice of classical styles could in theory be a statement of pagan religious identity, but this was by no means self-evident and there is little evidence to suggest that such a statement was ever made. Literary scholars presented the same argument in their field, for respect for classical literary culture was shared by the entire elite, pagan and Christian alike. A few Christians like Jerome and Augustine could question to what extent a Christian should share that culture, but despite their prominence in our sources these men in their own times were very much a minority. Religious, social and political historians have perhaps been slightly slower, but they too have increasingly recognised the weaknesses of the older scholarly model. Neither Christianity nor paganism are as easy to define as was once assumed and their interaction in the 4th c. was far more complex than a simplified vision of conflict and Christian triumph can allow. The careers and writings of leading figures such as Symmachus have received new attention, and new evidence has emerged particularly in the archaeological sphere.

I will return to the role of material culture in more detail in the second half of this paper. But the re-examination of the surviving literary sources has also been crucial, for it is our Christian texts that

⁴ Bloch (1945), (1963). See also Chuvín (1990).

⁵ The critical basis for this scholarly reaction is laid down by O'Donnell (1979) and in the numerous contributions of Alan Cameron (summarised in his article "The Last Pagans of Rome" (1999) and in his forthcoming book of the same title). There is a useful survey of the debate in Hedrick (2000) 37–88, esp. 47–54, while for an alternative approach see Ando (2001).

first laid down the image of the 4th c. as an age of polarised pagan and Christian conflict and Christian triumph. Christian preachers and polemicists constructed a binary opposition of true religion and pagan superstition which they called upon their audiences to accept, while church historians and hagiographers celebrated Christian success and the defeat or conversion of their pagan foes. The anti-pagan legislation of the Christian emperors drew upon the same polemical rhetoric, and modern scholars are now all too aware of the limitations of those laws as historical evidence.⁶ Imperial decrees were never easily enforced and, while their evidence should not be ignored, the laws and the religious categories they employ at times offer a greater insight into the mindset of those who requested and drafted the legislation than into the world outside the law codes. The Christian triumphalism of these literary sources has exerted a long influence on later scholarship, but it only conceals the true complexity of the religious world of the 4th and 5th centuries.

LATE ANTIQUE SENATORIAL PAGANISM

At the heart of this debate over the validity of our literary sources lies their construction of 'paganism' or, as some scholars now prefer, 'polytheism'.⁷ The very concept of paganism as a religious 'system' is primarily a Christian invention, combining the widely varied ancient cults and practices which Christianity rejected into a single unity against which Christianity could be contrasted as the one true religion. To refer to 'paganism' at all is therefore to adopt the language of religious polemic, and to impose uniform beliefs, practices and values across the extremely broad spectrum of those described as 'pagan' must lead inevitably to distortion. The older scholarly interpretation

⁶ For the difficulties posed by Late Roman law as a historical source see Harries (1999) and Matthews (2000), and for the *Theodosian Code* as evidence for the Christianisation of the Empire see Hunt (1993). The imperial chancery had begun to use *pagani* as the collective term for those not Christians, heretics or Jews by at least 370 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.2.18).

⁷ Remus (2004) provides a helpful introduction to the history of the term 'pagan' and its potential distortions. Remus prefers 'polytheist', but both terms impose collective constructs on the diversity of ancient religion and I have preferred 'pagan' here, both as a contemporary late antique term and because its use constantly reminds us of the polemical origins of such religious categories.

of the 'end of Roman paganism' in fact focused almost exclusively on one form of paganism, that expressed by the educated senatorial elite. To a degree this is inevitable, as this paper too demonstrates, for it is with the elite (a very small minority) and urban centres (particularly Rome herself) that our evidence lies. Yet even senatorial paganism, no less than senatorial Christianity, could take a variety of forms.

Bloch, drawing upon the earlier work of Robinson,⁸ divided the senatorial pagans between those who upheld the traditional State cults (whom he termed 'Roman') and those who emphasised the more personal mystery cults ('oriental').⁹ He attributed his 'pagan revival' and active pagan opposition to Christianity to the 'oriental' pagans, including Praetextatus and Flavianus, and regarded the 'Roman' pagans, led by Symmachus, as a passive minority. Such a neat division has rightly been rejected in more recent studies,¹⁰ for no contemporary pagan drew such a distinction and those who favoured the mysteries did not therefore reject the importance of the traditional State cults. Individual differences were a natural characteristic of the diverse religious beliefs and practices that Christianity classed as pagan, as indeed is easily demonstrated by the three men who feature so prominently in our knowledge of late 4th c. senatorial paganism, all of whom have been the subject of renewed interest in recent years.

Of the pagan triumvirate, the most renowned in his own lifetime was the eldest, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus.¹¹ Selected by Julian to be proconsul of Achaia,¹² he retained that office under the Christian Valentinian whom he successfully petitioned to allow nocturnal sacrifice to continue in Greece for the Eleusinian Mysteries.¹³ As Urban Prefect of Rome in 367 he demolished the walls of private houses that had been built on to temples,¹⁴ and as Praetorian Prefect in 384 he secured an imperial decree allowing an enquiry into the theft of temples treasures.¹⁵ Praetextatus' death in December 384, when consul designate,

⁸ Robinson (1915).

⁹ Bloch (1945) 203–13.

¹⁰ For a critique see Matthews (1973).

¹¹ See Kahlos (2002).

¹² Amm. Marc. 22.7.6.

¹³ Zos. 4.3.2; *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.7 (364).

¹⁴ Amm. Marc. 27.9.10.

¹⁵ Symmachus *Relat.* 21. Symmachus had to defend himself from accusations that he exploited this measure to attack Christians, accusations that even Damasus the Bishop of Rome confirmed were false.

led Symmachus to resign his own position as Urban Prefect, and his prominence was recognised by other contemporaries. He was admired by Ammianus Marcellinus¹⁶ and aroused the anger of Jerome,¹⁷ and he is the leading figure in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, in which the chief pagan senators of the late 4th c. gather around Praetextatus to debate religion and culture shortly before he died. Once regarded as a crucial source for the beliefs of Praetextatus and his contemporaries, the *Saturnalia* was in fact written over a generation later in *ca.*430 and offers an idealised vision of a now lost past.¹⁸ But the famous 'Speech of Praetextatus' in Macrobius, in which he presents a monotheistic or henotheistic interpretation of the numerous pagan deities as manifestations of the one divine sun, does at least find some echo in Praetextatus' funerary inscription and epitaph.¹⁹ The record of Praetextatus' career offered by the inscription is exceptional both in giving religious titles precedence over political offices and in the range of religious experience recorded in traditional and mystery cults alike.²⁰ The poem in praise of Praetextatus by his wife Paulina similarly attests to the depth of his religious convictions and to his belief that all cults could lead to one source, 'the gods' manifold divinity'.

Virius Nicomachus Flavianus is the least well-known of the three men traditionally regarded as the leaders of Late Roman senatorial paganism.²¹ His initial career was not exceptional and he played no apparent role in the debates of 384. Appointed Praetorian Prefect by Theodosius I in 390, he nevertheless supported the usurpation of Eugenius, most probably in reaction against Theodosius' anti-pagan

¹⁶ 'A senator of noble character and old-time dignity' (Amm. Marc. 22.7.6).

¹⁷ In one of his less attractive letters Jerome (*Ep.* 23) rejoiced that Praetextatus was now burning in hell, contrary to the belief of his widow that he now rested in heaven. Jerome apparently was not amused by Praetextatus' famous statement to Damasus: 'Make me bishop of Rome, and I will become a Christian at once' (quoted in Jerome, *Against John of Jerusalem* 8).

¹⁸ Cameron (1966).

¹⁹ *CIL* 6.1779 = *ILS* 1259; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.17–23. For a discussion of the speech, the solar monotheism of which echoes Julian's *Hymn to King Helios*, see Liebeschuetz (1999).

²⁰ In his announcement of Praetextatus' death (*Relat.* 12), Symmachus likewise affirms the priority of religion over political office in his friend's life. The closest contemporary parallel to Praetextatus' array of priesthoods and initiations is the epitaph of Alfenius Caeionius Julianus Kamenius (*CIL* 6.31902 = *ILS* 1264) from the Pomptine marshes, whose death (in 385) like that of Praetextatus is mourned by his widow in a poem.

²¹ For his career see O'Donnell (1978), who is perhaps too extreme in his efforts to play down Flavianus' significance, and Hedrick (2000) 13–25.

laws. He was reappointed Praetorian Prefect and made consul for 394 by Eugenius, and in this role he is reported to have revived the public rites of the Magna Mater and the *Floralia*. Unfortunately a precise reconstruction of his activities and of his own religious emphases is difficult, for our major source is the controversial *Carmen adversos paganos* (or *Carmen adversus Flavianus*), an anonymous Christian poem condemning the paganism of an unnamed prefect whose identity as Flavianus, although persuasive, is not universally accepted.²² After his suicide following Eugenius' defeat at the River Frigidus,²³ Flavianus' memory was initially condemned but later rehabilitated by an imperial *oratio* to the Senate in 431.²⁴ The inscribed decree, carved on a statue base and dedicated in the Forum of Trajan, omits both his paganism and his role in the usurpation of Eugenius, passing over such matters in the interests of concord.

The third prominent figure of Late Roman paganism is Quintus Aurelius Symmachus himself.²⁵ Best remembered today for the third *Relatio*, his failed appeal for the restoration of the Altar of Victory when Urban Prefect in 384, Symmachus is also known for his voluminous letter collection which includes a number of letters to Praetextatus (Book 1.44–55) and an entire book of letters to Flavianus (Book 2).²⁶ Symmachus' paganism appears to have focused around the traditional Roman State cults. This may in part reflect the influence of the third *Relatio*, whose argument was inevitably focused around tradition and the State, but it is no less true of his letters. His concern at the failure to expiate a portent at Spolegium, his criticism of priests absent from the altars and most notoriously his hard line insistence that an adulterous Vestal Virgin should face the full ancient penalty all reflect

²² The argument for Flavianus is presented by Matthews (1970) and Musso (1979). Manganaro (1960) identified the prefect as Gabinius Barbarus Pompeianus, urban prefect A.D. 408–409, but this later dating has not been widely accepted. Cracco Ruggini (1979, restated in a revised form in 1998) has alternatively identified the prefect as Praetextatus and so placed the *Carmen* in 384 and this view has gained significant support, although the question must remain open. The case for Flavianus has recently been restated by Coşkun (2004).

²³ Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.33.

²⁴ *CIL* 6.1783 = *ILS* 2948. See further Grünwald (1992), who suggests that Flavianus' rehabilitation might have provided the context for the *Carmen contra paganos*, and in particular Hedrick (2000).

²⁵ For Symmachus' political career see now Sogno (2006).

²⁶ On the letters, see Matthews (1974).

his devotion to traditional Roman religion.²⁷ Nevertheless, there is no indication that he opposed the mystery cults and he may indeed have known more of the mysteries than our evidence reveals, although it is unlikely that his involvement compared to that of Praetextatus. Symmachus also appears not to have shared Flavianus' militant support for Eugenius and he did not attend Flavianus' consular celebrations in 394 or his revived pagan celebrations. Symmachus' inactivity may have been influenced by his own experience in 388, when he had delivered a panegyric to the usurper Maximus and on Maximus' defeat had to seek forgiveness from Theodosius I (according to Christian sources after initially taking refuge in a Christian church).²⁸ But his caution also enabled him to come forward on behalf of Eugenius' former supporters, including Flavianus' son (and his own son-in-law), whose rehabilitation Symmachus helped to secure before his own death in 402.

Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, Virius Nicomachus Flavianus and Quintus Aurelius Symmachus represent three possible models for understanding the Late Roman pagan senatorial elite. The prominence of these men in our literary sources may well exaggerate their importance in their own lifetimes and we cannot assume that they were the 'leaders' of a pagan movement or that every 4th c. pagan senator can be neatly categorised according to one or other of these models. Yet while the differences between the three men highlight the diversity of Late Roman paganism, certain common elements do emerge. Praetextatus, Flavianus and Symmachus all held numerous pagan priesthoods, which reflects their political eminence but is also a characteristic feature of the 4th c. with fewer senators prepared to take on those duties in the increasingly Christian Empire. And although their attitudes towards the mystery cults may have varied, all three men shared a strong concern for Roman tradition and the preservation of the Roman State cults, which were the main focus both of the Altar of Victory Debate in 384 and the pagan revival under Flavianus in 394. If Flavianus' final years have become symbolic of pagan-Christian conflict, then the career of Symmachus in particular attests that concern for Roman pagan tradition did not have to lead down that path.

²⁷ Spoletium: Symmachus *Relat.* 1.49, absent priests: *Relat.* 1.51, Vestal Virgin: *Relat.* 9.108, 147–48.

²⁸ Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 5.14.

The reality was far more complex, and to fully understand we must look beyond the literary sources to the evidence of archaeology and material culture.

Archaeology has played a crucial role in widening our knowledge of the social and religious environment of 4th c. Rome. Ongoing excavations and the cataloguing of inscriptions and material remains continue to provide new evidence for analysis, and that evidence offers an insight into this world independent of the narrow and often polemical vision of our texts. Of course, archaeology too has its limitations. Like textual historians, archaeologists can only work with the material that has survived, and here Late Roman paganism lacks the advantages of the better preserved Christian monuments and artefacts. A number of sites have now been excavated and a few remarkable works of art do survive, some of which will be discussed further below, but here once more it is difficult to draw general conclusions when so much evidence has been lost. Perhaps more seriously, however, the evidence that has survived has in older scholarship too often been regarded as secondary and interpreted through the lens of our polemical texts. This is another area in which scholarly approaches have shifted significantly in recent years, and the value of material evidence for its own sake and on occasion as a control on the distortions of the literary sources has been rightly emphasised. As we will see in the pages that follow, this evidence reinforces the importance of the Roman State cults and traditional culture to men like Praetextatus, Flavianus and Symmachus and highlights again the complexity of pagan and Christian Rome in the 4th c.

TOPOGRAPHY, COMPETITION AND CONFLICT

The gilded Capitol today looks dingy, all the temples in Rome are covered with soot and cobwebs, the city is shaken to its foundations, and the people hurry past the ruined shrines and pour out to visit the martyrs' graves (Jer. *Ep.* 107.1 in A.D. 403).

The pagan State cults were intimately associated with the topography and social structures of Rome, and the last few decades have significantly expanded our understanding of the role of pagan and Christian religious buildings and festivals in the life of the city. The rise of Christian Rome, traced in detail in the classic works of Pietri

and Krautheimer, is now recognised as a far more complex process than those older studies suggest.²⁹ Christianity did obviously exert an ever-increasing influence on the urban landscape from Constantine onwards. But the oft-quoted words of Jerome at the beginning of the 5th c. only tell one side of the story. Throughout the 4th c. the pagan monumental centre of Rome had remained of focal importance and efforts were made to keep sanctuaries and temples maintained.³⁰ Praetextatus as Urban Prefect in 367–68 restored the *porticus deorum consentium* in the Forum Romanum and may also have restored the nearby Temple of Saturn, while renovation of the ‘House of the Vestals’ appears to have continued into the 4th c.³¹ Another temple on the south side of the Circus Maximus, dedicated either to Flora or to Venus, appears to have been repaired during the consulship of Flavianus in 394 by the latter’s son the Urban Prefect.³² Elsewhere in Rome, the so-called ‘Syrian Sanctuary’ dedicated to eastern divinities on the Janiculum was rebuilt, possibly in the mid-4th c.,³³ and in Ostia in 393–94 the Temple of Hercules was restored by Numerius Proiectus, the *praefectus annonae*.³⁴

It is easy to interpret these efforts to maintain the pagan structures of 4th c. Rome as a statement of identity by the pagan aristocracy, and for Praetextatus and Flavianus this must have an element of truth. Yet it is important to remember that this pagan identity need not be understood or expressed in anti-Christian terms and that respect for the monuments of the Roman past was by no means the preserve of pagans alone. Constantius on his famous visit to Rome in 357 was awestruck by the grandeur of the city, and although he removed the Altar of Victory (to which I will return) he showed respect for the Roman

²⁹ Pietri (1976), Krautheimer (1980). On 4th c. Rome see now Curran (2000), Lizzi (2004) and the volume edited by Ensoli and La Rocca (2000), and on the evolution of Christian Rome see Frascetti (1999), Pani Ermini (2000), Elsner (2003a) and the articles in Cooper and Hillner (2007). Goddard (2006) is also valuable for placing Late Roman paganism within its wider Italian context.

³⁰ See Machado (2006) for the ongoing importance of the *Forum Romanum* in Late Antiquity.

³¹ Forum Romanum: *CIL* 6.102 = *ILS* 4003; Temple of Saturn: *CIL* 6.937; House of the Vestals: Scott (2007).

³² This structure is discussed further by Michael Mulryan elsewhere in this volume.

³³ *L'area* (1982); Goddard (2004).

³⁴ *AE* (1941) 66. This inscription is the “New Document” of Bloch (1945).

temples and maintained the traditional Roman priesthoods.³⁵ This admiration for the Roman past was also shared within the Christian aristocracy. In the 4th c. Rome was never a regular imperial residence,³⁶ and this offered new opportunities for self-expression to the senatorial class, whose ongoing competition had characterised Rome from its origins, and increasingly to the Roman Church. With the expanding conversion of the Roman elite,³⁷ some like Pinianus and Melania the Younger turned to asceticism and a uniquely Christian expression of their religious identity. This identity could on occasion be expressed through outbursts of anti-pagan violence, as through the destruction of a Roman mithraeum by the Urban Prefect Gracchus celebrated by Jerome.³⁸ But other Christian aristocrats continued to uphold the importance of tradition and continuity with the glorious past. The 4th c. saw the emergence of a number of rival interpretations of that past that could transcend religious boundaries, and it is against the background of this spectrum of competing claims rather than purely through a polarised vision of religious conflict that the material evidence for Late Roman paganism needs to be understood.³⁹

Differing religious interests could compete for the same urban topography without necessarily descending into outright conflict. The discovery of a number of 4th c. inscribed altars from the Phrygianum sanctuary on the Vatican Hill testify to the importance of this site to pagans no less than Christians.⁴⁰ The altars, dating from *ca.* A.D. 295 to 390, record upper class pagans who received the *taurobolium* in the cult

³⁵ Amm. Marc. 16.10 (omitting any reference to the Altar); Symmachus, *Relat.* 3.7. On Constantius' visit see further Edbrooke (1976) and Klein (1979).

³⁶ Nevertheless, imperial influence upon Rome should not be underestimated: see Humphries (2007).

³⁷ See the classic works of Brown (1961) and von Hachling (1978), with the arguments of Barnes (1995), who traces Christian prominence in the Roman aristocracy earlier than those two works allow, and more recently Salzman (2002).

³⁸ 'Did he not break and burn all the monstrous images there by which worshippers were initiated as Raven, Bridegroom, Soldier, Lion, Perseus, Sun-Runner and Father? Did he not send them before him as hostages and gain for himself baptism in Christ?' (Jer. *Ep.* 107.2).

³⁹ For further discussion of the relationship of Christians and pagans in 4th c. Rome, see in addition to the works cited in n. 29 and n. 37 above the important articles of Cameron (1999) and Luzzi (1995, 2006).

⁴⁰ One might also cite here the via Latina Catacomb, where pagans and Christians are buried side by side and pagan mythology is juxtaposed to biblical scenes. See further Ferrua (1960) and Tronzo (1986).

of the Magna Mater and Attis.⁴¹ This rite is little understood, and is often wrongly interpreted as a ‘baptism in bull’s blood’ developed as a rival to Christian initiation. It was, however, an important statement of religious identity to the men and women who commissioned the altars, and in the 4th c. the *taurobolium* became an essentially personal ceremony in contrast to its earlier public function.⁴² The altars and their inscriptions must therefore be compared to the parallel statements of Christian elite identity visible in the nearby Church of St. Peter, most notably the funerary inscription of the great senator Petronius Probus who was buried in the Church shortly after his baptism.⁴³ Both sites served the same purpose as “a means for senatorial self-expression”,⁴⁴ a competition for topography and display that was social as much as it was religious. Yet there is no apparent awareness of this rivalry in our sources, and no indication of violence in this contest for the identity of the Vatican.⁴⁵

In one famous instance, the competition for urban topography did lead to potential conflict: the removal by the Christian emperors of the Altar of Victory from the Roman Senate House. The importance of the Altar in the religious history of the 4th c. has almost certainly been exaggerated. Its prominence derives from the so-called ‘Altar of Victory Debate’ between Symmachus and Ambrose of Milan in 384 when Symmachus, as Urban Prefect, despatched the third *Relatio* to Emperor Valentinian II to appeal for the restoration of the Altar which had been removed by Valentinian’s deceased brother Gratian in 382.⁴⁶ ‘Debate’ is a slight misnomer, as the two letters that Ambrose wrote in response to Symmachus’ third *Relatio* were addressed to the emperor rather than to Symmachus himself,⁴⁷ and their exchange

⁴¹ See in general Duthoy (1969), who catalogues the Roman epigraphic evidence (nos. 11–34), and now McLynn (1996).

⁴² McLynn (1996) 323–28.

⁴³ *CIL* 6.1756 (ca. A.D. 389). See Trout (2001).

⁴⁴ McLynn (1996) 328.

⁴⁵ Guarducci (1982) has suggested that there was a break of 28 years in *taurobolia* rituals due to the construction of St Peter’s, but this is rejected by McLynn (1996) 328–29. It is possible that the obelisk that now stands before St Peter’s may originally have been erected near the Phrygianum, but this again cannot be proven.

⁴⁶ For texts and discussion see Klein (1972), Matthews (1975) 203–11, Croke and Harries (1982) 28–51 and Evenepoel (1998–99).

⁴⁷ See McLynn (1994) 166–67, who argues that Ambrose’s first letter to Valentinian II pre-empted the arrival of the third *Relatio*, while his longer second letter was circulated only after the ‘debate’ had already been resolved.

appears to have exerted little influence on either pagan or Christian contemporaries. Nevertheless, while the Altar's status as a symbol of the decline of paganism may have been overstated, its removal and the failure of Symmachus' petition was one more step in the disappearance of the traditional Roman State cults. The arguments of Symmachus and Ambrose reflect their awareness of what was at stake and of the significance of topography in the competition of paganism and Christianity, and the issues involved were sufficiently important to be argued anew by the Christian poet Prudentius some twenty years after the events in his *Contra Symmachum*.⁴⁸

The Altar of Victory was erected by Augustus in 29 B.C. to commemorate the battle of Actium, and remained in place until the reign of Constantius II, who removed it during his visit to Rome in 357. The Altar was restored shortly afterwards, probably during the reign of Julian, but it was removed again by Gratian in 382 who went further than Constantius by rejecting the title of *pontifex maximus* and cutting off State subsidies for the Roman priesthods, notably the Vestal Virgins.⁴⁹ For Symmachus this separation of the ancient cults from the Roman State had to lead inexorably to disaster,⁵⁰ and so he appealed to Valentinian not only for the return of the Altar but the restoration of the subsidies to the priesthods. This plea was mocked by Ambrose as no more than naked greed, a charge that some older scholarship took more seriously than it deserved.⁵¹ But the issue for Symmachus was not the cost (which the pagan senatorial aristocracy could themselves have paid) but the bond between the State and the traditional cults which the subsidies maintained.⁵² The Altar itself likewise symbolised that bond, a focus of loyalty where pagan senators burned incense and took the oath of allegiance, and so Symmachus upheld the Altar as essential

⁴⁸ Prudentius' poem achieved its present state in A.D. 402/403, but whether this date marks the composition of the entire work or the final revision of material originally composed in the 380s or 390s remains debated. For some modern interpretations with bibliography see Barnes and Westall (1991) 59–61.

⁴⁹ For the date and context of Gratian's actions see Cameron (1968).

⁵⁰ As evidence Symmachus cites the famine that apparently affected Rome in 383 (*Relat.* 3.15–17). In making this argument, which Ambrose and Prudentius easily refuted, Symmachus was of course avoiding the more telling but dangerous case of the murder of Gratian not long after his removal of the Altar.

⁵¹ McGeachy (1942), Paschoud (1965).

⁵² 'Are we to take it that Roman religious institutions are outside Roman law?' (Symmachus *Relat.* 3.13).

to the prestige and harmony of the Senate.⁵³ Ambrose in response condemned the Altar as a source of pollution for the Christians whom he insisted now comprised the senatorial majority.⁵⁴ Whether there was in truth a pagan or Christian majority within the Senate in 384 is very difficult to determine, but the removal of the Altar was a further stage in removing explicitly pagan elements from the ceremonial surrounding the meetings of the traditional Roman elite.

The debate over the Altar of Victory is another valuable demonstration that pagans and Christians alike in 4th c. Rome were keenly aware of the importance of the urban landscape of the city. That awareness was reflected not only in the construction and repair of buildings and monuments but through the ceremonial exploitation of public space, as we have also seen in the words of Jerome previously quoted and in the competition for the Vatican Hill. Christian processions and liturgical celebrations increased in scale and splendour from Constantine onwards, but older pagan festivals too remained prominent. The complex variety of social and religious events that filled the Roman year in the middle of the 4th c. is preserved for us in the *Codex-Calendar of 354*, a work apparently commissioned and compiled by Christians in which both Christian and pagan festivals are recorded.⁵⁵ Gradually the Christian ecclesiastical year and the Christian interpretation of time would come to dominate, but some pagan festivals continued for centuries, gradually stripped (officially if not necessarily privately) of pagan religious elements yet still providing a focus for social unity and a connection to the great Roman past. The Lupercalia was still patronised by the Christian Roman elite into the 6th c., despite occasional papal opposition.⁵⁶ Other pagan festivals exerted a profound influence on the Christian calendar, most notably the Saturnalia and the *dies natalis Solis Invicti* in the evolution of Christmas.

Closely associated with the traditional pagan calendar of Rome were the chariot races and other games that played a central role in the life of the city.⁵⁷ Christian literary hostility to the games had a long history

⁵³ Symmachus *Relat.* 3.5.

⁵⁴ Amb. *Ep.* 17.9, 18.31.

⁵⁵ See Salzman (1990). The Christian festivals in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* are recorded separately from the traditional calendar, not integrated with it. By contrast, the later Calendar of Polemius Silvius (composed in Gaul in 448/49) incorporates 'pagan' and Christian festivals together in an explicitly Christian framework (Salzman (1990) 242–46).

⁵⁶ Holleman (1974).

⁵⁷ See Salzman (1990) 146–56, Lim (1999), Curran (2000) 218–59.

by the 4th c., but that hostility does not appear to have been shared by the majority of Christians and the early Christian emperors were fully aware of the importance of public entertainment as a focus for unity across social and religious divisions.⁵⁸ Repeated laws emphasised the need to continue festival games once the festivals had been stripped of public pagan rites.⁵⁹ The games remained equally important to the senatorial class, for whom conspicuous expenditure on such entertainments was an essential mark of their status,⁶⁰ and offered the pagan elite an opportunity to express their traditional values. Yet there is little indication that the games ever became a focus for conflict. Andreas Alföldi in 1943 argued that the bronze contorniate medallions issued in Rome throughout the second half of the 4th c. and into the 5th c. were expressions of anti-Christian aristocratic propaganda.⁶¹ The mythical, literary and historical iconography of the medallions, however, would have been interpreted by most contemporaries as Roman rather than pagan, and the contorniates were probably distributed at games as traditional gifts. The survival of ancient festivals and games and the evidence of the contorniates and the *Codex-Calendar of 354* all serve to remind us that the public social and religious life of late antique Rome was far more diverse and far less explicitly and exclusively Christian than writers such as Jerome were prepared to admit.

STATUARY, ART AND LITERATURE

The same complexity is equally apparent from other surviving evidence of Late Roman elite art, statuary and literary culture.⁶² Like all ancient cities, Rome in the 4th c. was densely populated with statues. Christian attitudes towards pagan statues varied widely in Late Antiquity, with hostility primarily reserved for the cult statues of pagan deities.⁶³

⁵⁸ Symmachus *Relat.* 6, reminds the emperor of the need to provide games, and *Relat.* 9 gives thanks for the lavish entertainments provided and reports the gratitude of the people.

⁵⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3 (342), 8 (382), 17 (399).

⁶⁰ Symmachus is famously said to have spent some 2000 pounds of gold on the games celebrating his son's praetorship (Olympiodorus, fragment 41.2 (ed. and transl. Blockley (1981–83)).

⁶¹ Alföldi (1943). The full catalogue and commentary on the contorniates was published as Alföldi and Alföldi (1976, 1990).

⁶² For an overview of late 4th c. art see Kiilerich (1993), Elsner (1998).

⁶³ See in general Mango (1963), Saradi-Mendelovici (1990).

Such statues could be regarded as possessing divine or demonic power, and before the Battle of the River Frigidus the pagan supporters of Eugenius allegedly erected statues of Jupiter in the Alps which were destroyed by Theodosius after his victory.⁶⁴ Within Rome, however, statues were closely associated with aristocratic competition and the celebration of the heroic past. Like the restoration of temples, the movement and re-erection of ancient Roman statues during the 4th c. may in a number of instances have represented a statement of religious as well as social identity, but such motives are difficult to identify in the evidence we possess.⁶⁵ The statue of Victory in the Senate House appears to have been removed together with the Altar, but this remains disputed.⁶⁶ One of the few statues that did arouse controversy was in fact the statue of Praetextatus erected after his death by the Vestal Virgins, which was actually opposed by Symmachus.⁶⁷ The latter's insistence that such a grant was unprecedented and untraditional is characteristic of Symmachus' personal religious convictions, but the statue was apparently erected, for Praetextatus' widow Paulina erected a statue of the Chief Vestal, Coelia Concordia, in her house in gratitude for the Vestals' dedication to her husband.⁶⁸

Perhaps the most famous works of art to survive from the pagan circles of the Late Roman elite are again associated with the family of Symmachus. Two separate leaves survive from what appears to have been originally a single ivory diptych dated to the late 4th or early 5th c., one plaque inscribed at the top with *Symmachorum* (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London) and the second inscribed *Nichomachorum* (Musée du Cluny, Paris).⁶⁹ Both depict female figures engaged in pagan cult acts before a lit altar.⁷⁰ The woman on the

⁶⁴ August, *De civ. D.* 5.26.

⁶⁵ For the movement of statues in the *Forum Romanum* see Machado (2006) 179–85.

⁶⁶ For the argument that the statue and altar were removed together see Gnifka (1991) 33–40.

⁶⁷ Symmachus *Ep.* 2.36 to Nicomachus Flavianus.

⁶⁸ *CIL* 6.2145 = *ILS* 1261.

⁶⁹ Volbach (1976) no. 55. The argument of Eisenberg (1992, 1993) that the *Symmachorum* panel is a later forgery has been strongly rejected on art historical and technical grounds by Kinney (1994b) (who also demonstrates that the diptych is the work of two different craftsmen) and Cutler (1994). The early date of the ivory of the *Symmachorum* panel has also been confirmed by radiocarbon dating (Williamson (2003)).

⁷⁰ For the iconography of the two panels see Cameron (1986) 42–45 and particularly Kinney (1994a).

Symmachorum diptych wears an ivy wreath in her hair (a symbol of Dionysus) and stands before an oak (the tree sacred to Jupiter) while offering incense.⁷¹ On the *Nicomachorum* diptych the woman holds two torches pointing downwards (suggesting the Eleusinian cult of Demeter and Kore) in front of a pine tree from which hang cymbals (both symbols of the cult of the Magna Mater).⁷² The quality of the carving is very high, although the two panels appear to have been cut by different craftsmen, and the style is intensely classicizing. It was these panels above all that underlay Bloch's assertion that the patronage of deliberately classicizing art played a central role in his Late Roman 'pagan revival'.⁷³

The context which inspired the two panels has aroused considerable debate. Ivory diptychs were usually distributed to celebrate particular events,⁷⁴ and in light of the inscriptions on these panels the event in question here must have been one important to the families of both Symmachus and Nicomachus Flavianus. The obvious hypothesis was that the diptych celebrated a wedding, for two marriages uniting the families are known. Symmachus' daughter married the younger Flavianus in ca.387 and Symmachus' son married the elder Flavianus' granddaughter in 401. As Alan Cameron emphasised over thirty years ago, however, there is no marital or erotic imagery appropriate to a wedding on either panel, and the lowered torches on the *Nicomachorum* leaf are traditionally associated with death.⁷⁵ The diptych would thus actually appear to derive from a funeral, and the most logical candidate

⁷¹ A now lost third panel which depicted a scene almost identical to that of the *Symmachorum* leaf, but which bore the name Ennobertus, is known from an 18th c. engraving as the Fauvel or Ennobertus panel (see Lasko (1981)). Cameron (1984) argues that this panel derives from another diptych from the same series as the *Symmachorum-Nicomachorum* panels with the original inscription (*Symmachorum* or *Nicomachorum*) replaced by a Carolingian name and with the slight differences in detail intended to represent the cults of Apollo and Mercury. His argument is plausible but cannot be proven.

⁷² As previously mentioned, it is possible that Flavianus revived the public rites of the Magna Mater in 394, while the so-called 'Basilica Hilariana' next to the 'House of the Symmachi' on the Caelian Hill was also associated with the cult of the Magna Mater (Pavolino (1993)).

⁷³ Bloch (1963) 212–13.

⁷⁴ The majority of extant late antique diptychs are consular: see Olovsson (2005).

⁷⁵ Cameron (1986) 42–45. Simon (1992) defends the marital association of the diptych, but her argument is unconvincing and unfortunately she appears to be unaware of Cameron's article.

would be Symmachus himself who died in 402.⁷⁶ Cameron goes on to propose that the funeral of Symmachus would also offer an appropriate setting for a third ivory panel, the so-called *Consecratio* diptych (now in the British Museum) which depicts on three levels a funerary procession, funeral pyre and a scene of apotheosis.⁷⁷ The deceased does not appear to be an emperor as there is no imperial imagery, and a complex monogram at the top of the leaf may read *Symmachorum* (the lost second half of this diptych presumably bore the monogram for *Nichomachorum*).⁷⁸ If the *Consecratio* panel does in fact commemorate the same event as the *Symmachorum* and *Nichomachorum* panels, then it is striking that the *Consecratio* panel is entirely non-classical in style. “We find the same aristocratic family simultaneously patronizing the classical and the modern. Nor should this seem surprising. The mistake rather is to identify classical style with paganism”.⁷⁹ The ivory diptychs are important evidence for the personal religion of the two men they commemorate, but they are not intended as propaganda for a wider ‘pagan movement’ or the inspiration for a pagan classical revival.

The weakness of any assumption that classicizing art must by definition be associated with active paganism is amply demonstrated by another famous elite work approximately contemporary to the Symmachus diptychs. In 1793 at the base of the Esquiline Hill a treasury of silver artefacts was discovered.⁸⁰ Their date can only be determined by style, but their 4th c. origin is widely recognised and their burial has been plausibly associated with the threat of Alaric to Rome in 409–10. The best known item in the collection, now in the British Museum, is the Proiecta Casket, a silver casket with a hinged lid usually assumed to have been a wedding gift from the medallion on the lid which depicts a man and a woman, presumably husband and wife.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Kiilerich (1991) supports the funerary interpretation of the diptych but argues that such explicit pagan iconography would not have been promoted after the anti-pagan laws of 391 and so associates the diptych with the death of Praetextatus (an argument repeated in Kiilerich (1993) 144–49).

⁷⁷ Volbach (1976) no. 56; Buckton (1994) no. 44; Cameron (1986) 45–49. See also Olovsson (2005) 170–72.

⁷⁸ The reading of the monogram as *Symmachorum* remains controversial, however, and is rejected by Wright (1998) 359–64, who dates this panel to the mid 5th c. and returns to the theory it shows an imperial apotheosis: perhaps Antoninus Pius.

⁷⁹ Cameron (1986) 63. See further Elsner (1998), esp. 186–97.

⁸⁰ For the history and contents of the treasure see Shelton (1981).

⁸¹ Shelton (1981) no. 1, Buckton (1994) no. 10. For a recent analysis of the casket in the context of female roles in Late Antiquity, see Elsner (2003b).

On the front face below the medallion is Venus on her cockle-shell regarding herself in a mirror, a pose emulated by the seated woman in the panel underneath her who appears to be the bride and recipient of the casket. The iconography of Venus is traditional and might in older scholarship have been described as pagan. Yet between the scenes of Venus and the seated woman runs the inscription that gives the Proiecta casket its name: *Secunde et Proiecta vivatis in Chri(sto)* ('Secundus and Proiecta, may you live in Christ').

The precise identity of Proiecta and Secundus remains uncertain, as does the date of the casket, and the inscription may have been added later rather than forming part of the original composition.⁸² Yet the very existence of the Proiecta Casket warns us to be very cautious before assuming any immediate association between the style or iconography of an artefact and the religious values of its owner or owners. Were it not for the inscription, this casket could easily have been celebrated as further evidence for a 'pagan revival' in art. Yet the depiction of Venus on the Proiecta Casket must rather be compared with the Dionysiac imagery amid the Christian and Scriptural iconography of the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus or the illustrations of pagan festivals in the Christian *Codex-Calendar of 354*.⁸³ In a world in which respect for the past transcended religious boundaries, we can never assume that stylistic or iconographic traditions drawing upon that past reveal to us individual religious convictions. They may do so, as in the instance of the *Symmachorum* and *Nicomachorum* diptychs, but these remarkable ivories are very much the exception rather than the rule.

The complex relationship between paganism, Christianity and classical culture visible in the elite art of 4th c. Rome is no less visible in the sphere of literature. This is far too vast a subject to be discussed in any detail here, but the literary activity of the senatorial pagans of the generation of Symmachus merits attention and has played a significant

⁸² Shelton (1985) proposes a date of *ca.* 330–70, whereas Cameron (1985) places the casket in *ca.* 380, a date supported on other grounds by Küllerich (1993) 163–65. According to Cameron, Secundus may have belonged to the pagan Turcius family, as suggested by monograms on other items from the Esquiline treasure, which would suggest that Proiecta was the Christian in a mixed pagan-Christian marriage. She may also be the young married woman named Proiecta who died on 30 December 383, and is commemorated in an epitaph by Pope Damasus, although Shelton rejects this association.

⁸³ On the Sarcophagus see Malbon (1990), on the images of the *Codex-Calendar* see Salzman (1990) 74–91.

and at times exaggerated role in scholarly assessments of Late Roman paganism.⁸⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus famously denounced the Roman elite for reading nothing but Juvenal and Marius Maximus,⁸⁵ yet Symmachus was renowned for his oratory as well as for his letters and Flavianus was the author of a lost historical work, the *Annales*.⁸⁶ The latter work has on occasion been regarded as a possible pagan manifesto, but in reality all that we know of the *Annales* beyond their title is that Flavianus dedicated the work to Theodosius I, which does not suggest an explicitly pagan or anti-Christian purpose. Even Flavianus' translation of Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, a text sometimes regarded as presenting Apollonius as a rival of Christ, cannot be proven to have had a religious purpose.⁸⁷ Symmachus and Flavianus certainly knew and admired the great writers of the past, and for them at least such learning was inseparable from their religion.⁸⁸ But this does not necessarily imply that they regarded that culture as the exclusive preserve of paganism.⁸⁹ As we have already seen, respect for the Roman past was shared throughout the senatorial elite. Here again we need to beware the assumption that a revival of classical learning must derive from a background of conflict and hostility to Christianity.

Literary culture could and did become a focus for religious tension in the 4th c. During his short reign, Julian sought to impose upon the Empire his own conviction that classical learning was the exclusive preserve of paganism, promoting Hellenism and banning Christians from teaching the ancient texts whose beliefs they did not share. Not all Christians disagreed, particularly those influenced by the rising ascetic movement, and Jerome and Augustine were among those who

⁸⁴ See Markus (1974), Alan Cameron (1977), (2004) and more generally Averil Cameron (1991).

⁸⁵ Amm. Marc. 18.4.14. That Ammianus himself was not closely associated with Symmachus or his friends has been recognised ever since Cameron (1964).

⁸⁶ Symmachus: He is described as *orator disertissimus* (CIL 6.1699 = ILS 2946) and is presented in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* as a "flowery" orator in the style of Pliny the Younger (Macrobius, *Sat.* 5.1.7); Flavianus: in his inscription, parallel to that of Symmachus', he is described as *historicus disertissimus* (CIL 6.1782 = ILS 2947). On the *Annales* of Flavianus, see Bleckmann (1995).

⁸⁷ Flavianus' translation is known from Sidonius Apollinaris (*Ep.* 8.3.1) and is described as "a deliberate act of pagan propaganda" by Bloch (1945) 220. This interpretation is entirely plausible, but impossible to verify from our limited evidence.

⁸⁸ The rhetorical and idealised image of the late 4th c. pagan elite presented in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* depicts these men engaged in deep debate focused around Vergil's *Aeneid*.

⁸⁹ As was argued by Markus (1974) 9–11.

questioned the extent to which educated Christians should be influenced by what they regarded as pagan culture. Despite the prominence of such attitudes within our source record, however, in their own times the views of Julian, Augustine and Jerome were very much those of the minority. A pagan supporter of Julian could nevertheless criticise his law against Christian teaching as meriting 'lasting oblivion',⁹⁰ and many elite Christians felt no qualms in reconciling their education with their faith. The Christian Ausonius was a good friend of Symmachus, united by their mutual love for the classical past,⁹¹ and the more militant Prudentius likewise drew heavily on ancient models, particularly Vergil, and can express respect for Symmachus even as he condemns the latter's defence of the Altar of Victory.⁹² In literature as in art the late 4th c. was a period of cultural assimilation and transformation far more than conflict, an ongoing competition for a tradition that all wished to claim.

CONCLUSION

4th c. Rome was a complex and dynamic urban world. By the death of Theodosius I in 395 the traditional State cults of Roman paganism were in sharp decline, a decline that struck at the heart of Symmachus and those who believed as he did that the survival of the Empire depended upon the enduring bond between the State and the ancient religion of Rome. Yet the loss of imperial support for the State cults did not in itself signify the 'end of paganism' even within the Roman elite. It is all too easy to focus upon specific episodes like the Altar of Victory Debate or the Battle of the River Frigidus. These events are important, but it is striking just how little evidence for religious conflict we find in Rome during the 4th c. Indeed, the evidence for conflict within the Christian Church is significantly greater than for tension between Christians and pagans.

⁹⁰ Amm. Marc. 22.10.7.

⁹¹ On their relationship, bound by shared culture despite religious difference, see Bowersock (1986).

⁹² The preface to the *Contra Symmachum* includes a plea that God should not allow Symmachus to fall into hell for his impiety and ignorance (Prudent. *C. Symm.* 86–89).

Why was public religious conflict so limited in the 4th c.? Even in asking that question we are following the polarised polemic of our Christian sources, which depict paganism as a uniform and hostile counterpart to Christianity. Within the extremely diverse spectrum of Roman paganism only a relative few were ever provoked into violent retaliation by the Christian advance, as Flavianus appears to have been in 394 after the Theodosian laws of 391–92. The true impact of imperial religious policy from the conversion of Constantine onwards lay less in the anti-pagan legislation, which was always difficult to enforce, than in the open favour and patronage bestowed on Christianity. The wealth and privileges invested in the Church dramatically transformed the social status of Christians and the public prominence of churches and Christian festivals, a transformation particularly visible in Rome itself, while the loss of imperial support saw the corresponding decline of pagan temples and public celebrations. The shift was gradual and was by no means complete by the end of the 4th c., but it created an environment in which the transition from paganism to Christianity could more easily be made.

Yet to speak of ‘conversion’ or ‘Christianisation’ is of course to raise further questions, for there was no abrupt break which saw the replacement of one religious system with another. The values and culture that had characterised Late Roman paganism continued in new forms, above all at the level of the elite, and this proved a further crucial factor in controlling any threat of religious violence. Pagan and Christian elites shared their respect for the Roman past, for Roman tradition, and for classical culture. For some this classical culture was exclusively pagan culture, from which Christians should be denied or which Christians themselves should reject. But such polemical attitudes were never the norm. The second half of the 4th c. witnessed instead an ongoing debate over how that shared tradition was to be interpreted and expressed. For Praetextatus, Flavianus and Symmachus, whatever their differences in personality and convictions, Roman tradition was intimately bound up with their religion and with the State cults of Roman paganism. Their writings, inscriptions, building activity and art express an ideology rooted in the Roman past. That ideology has often been described in terms of nostalgia or antiquarianism, yet we need to avoid the negative connotations which those terms sometimes hold. Respect for the past for these men was not an escape from the present but a living religious and social ideal, which was upheld for the next generation in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* and which

fully merited the attention it received in Augustine's *City of God*. But it was an ideology that was ultimately unable to compete with the forces of 'Christianisation' and assimilation that were to shape Rome in the following centuries.

Many questions inevitably remain unanswered. To what extent should we still speak of a Roman 'pagan revival' in the 380s and 390s, a model that implies significant change from the Rome visited by Constantius in 357? Praetextatus, Flavianus and Symmachus are men worthy of further study, but were they in any sense pagan 'leaders'? Did paganism even within the Roman elite develop a sharpened sense of identity during the fourth c. under the impact of imperial legislation and Christian polemic? These are not easy questions to answer. The underlying theme of this paper, as of so much modern scholarship in this field, is that the religious, social and cultural developments once so neatly categorised as 'Christianisation' and religious conflict are far more complex and important than older and simpler models could allow. There was conflict, and it is not my intention to downplay the tensions and uncertainties of 4th c. Rome. Yet that conflict must be set within a wider context. From the complex aristocratic world of the 4th c. was to emerge, by the dawn of the 6th c., a Christian elite still bound to the culture and traditions of the Roman past, but which understood that inheritance on terms that Symmachus could never have recognised. Symmachus would have mourned the loss, but he would also have mourned the destructive years of the mid-6th c. that marked the true end of his senatorial world.

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TEMPLES IN THE WEST

TEMPLES IN LATE ANTIQUE GAUL

Penelope J. Goodman

Abstract

Literary sources emphasise the role of Christian iconoclasts and church-builders in the demise of Gaul's pagan temples. But the picture from archaeology is different, since excavated remains suggest that the main story is one of voluntary abandonment from the late 3rd c. A.D. onwards. This may be linked with the military upheavals of the period, but indirectly, due to factors such as financial difficulties and the changing priorities of the elite. Meanwhile, the imperial adoption of Christianity and the beginnings of official hostility towards pagan religion had little impact, because by the time they came into effect, the heyday of pagan sacred architecture in Gaul had passed.

INTRODUCTION: THE GALLO-ROMAN SACRED LANDSCAPE

Gaul in the Roman era was rich in temples, and its temples were rich in variety. In southern Gaul, and particularly Narbonensis, temples in the Vitruvian classical tradition predominated: over forty are known, mostly located in towns and cities.¹ But the three northerly provinces—Aquitania, Belgica and Lugdunensis—were characterised instead by a local variant, known as the Romano-Celtic temple, Gallo-Roman temple or *fanum*. These have traditionally been defined in terms of their concentric ground-plans, in which a tall *cella* of roughly square, circular or polygonal shape is surrounded on all sides by a gallery approximately half its width, either porticoed or enclosed.² But the local temple tradition was distinguished above all by its variety: small single-celled temples without a surrounding gallery; temples with a porch only; and temples of great size and complexity whose decoration

¹ Figure from references in Grenier (1958), Bedon (2001) and van Andringa (2002).

² Fauduet (1993a) 11.

and layout were close to the classical model.³ These temples were once seen as a 'Romanised' version of pre-conquest buildings.⁴ While this is a perfectly reasonable interpretation of the single-celled versions, the galleried examples are now thought to be an architectural innovation, emerging out of the interaction between Roman and Gallic culture.⁵ A systematic survey of them in the early 1990s by Isabelle Fauduet identified no fewer than 653 examples.⁶ Finally, from the 2nd c. A.D., mithraea also began appearing in Gaul;⁷ characterised by their rectangular shape, central aisle and often a semi-subterranean location, some eleven of these temples are known across the four Gallic provinces.⁸

Gallic temples were built in a variety of locations, and played different roles in local life. They could be found in the centres of cities or on their peripheries, in small towns and villages, or in isolation, and might occur singly, in groups, in association with other buildings such as baths and theatres, or enclosed within a sacred *temenos*.⁹ Temples built in the urban centre tended to be classical in style, even in northern Gaul where the Romano-Celtic style was numerically predominant. Meanwhile, Romano-Celtic temples generally occurred on urban peripheries or anywhere in the territory beyond. But the rules were not hard and fast, and exceptions in both directions are known.¹⁰ Temples could be owned and used on an official level by a civic community, or belong to a smaller group focused around kinship, trade or a settlement.¹¹ Trier furnishes the best examples from both ends of the spectrum: epigraphic evidence shows that the monumental periurban sanctuary of Lenus Mars was the focus for civic worship involving participants from across the territory of the Treveri, while many of the temples clustered in the Altbachtal complex were built by private

³ Wilson (1975); Muckelroy (1976) 186; Cabuy (1991) 73; Derks (1998) 145, 148–52; Fauduet (1993a) 51–64.

⁴ Wilson (1975) 3–4; Horne (1986) 22.

⁵ Muckelroy (1976) 189; Derks (1998) 177–83; Smith (2001) 10.

⁶ Fauduet (1993a); Fauduet (1993b).

⁷ Walters (1974); Sauer (1996).

⁸ Six of these mithraea were known to Walters (1974) 3–30, while five later discoveries at Bordeaux, Mackwiller, Mandelieu, Martigny and Septeuil are now catalogued in Sauer (1996) 82–83.

⁹ Fauduet (1993a) 30–49; Derks (1998) 190–98.

¹⁰ Goodman (2007) 128–29 and n. 251.

¹¹ Derks (1998) 185–99.

groups and individuals.¹² We should remember, finally, that temples were only one component in the sacred landscape, and religious life in Roman Gaul also involved rituals focused around altars, sacred enclosures, sculpted columns, stone basins, hearths, pits, trees, rocks, water-features, road-ways and hill-tops—less visible to us archaeologically, but no less important to practitioners.¹³

This variety amongst the temples of Gaul is an enormous asset in terms of what we can learn by tracing what happened to them through the late antique period. By comparing the fates of temples located in different situations, constructed in different architectural styles or used by different groups of people, we can gain insight into important issues such as relationships between city and country in late antique Gaul, or the nature of changes in the use of the landscape. Observing patterns of change over the corpus as a whole will strengthen our understanding of province-wide developments: the pace and character of religious change, the effects of military and economic disruption, and the impact of imperial policy and political change.

VITALITY AND OBSOLESCENCE

Temple construction in Gaul all but ceased after the end of the 2nd c. Fauduet cited only eight Romano-Celtic temples built in the 3rd c. and none in the 4th, while most classical temples had been constructed during the great phases of urban monumentalisation in the 1st and early 2nd centuries A.D.¹⁴ In part, the drop-off may be accounted for by saturation: people concentrated on rebuilding and embellishing existing temples. But the same factors which began to cause the abandonment of existing temples in the later 3rd c. will also have been at work (see below). Nonetheless, substantial religious complexes could still be built in the second half of the 3rd c.: thus, at Matagne-la-Grande, in the territory of the Tungri, a large *temenos* enclosure containing at least two Romano-Celtic temples has yielded next to no finds earlier than the 260s, and the excavators believe that the sanctuary

¹² Scheid (1991); Scheid (1995).

¹³ Fauduet (1993a) 5; Derks (1998) 132–33, 154–58.

¹⁴ Fauduet (1993a) 91; Fauduet (1993b) 118–20; van Andringa (2002) 54–65 and 78–79.

was built in this period.¹⁵ Mithras, a relative late-comer to Gaul, is a more obvious candidate for late temple construction, and while mithraea began appearing in the 2nd c., some construction came in the 3rd c. at Trier, Bordeaux, and probably also Vieu-en-Val-Romey and Les Bolards.¹⁶

Rebuildings and embellishments, though, continued into the 4th and even the 5th c. At Champallement, Nièvre, in Burgundy, new rooms were added to the east gallery of a *temenos* surrounding an octagonal temple in the early 4th c.¹⁷ At Matagne-la-Grande, coins embedded in the masonry of a similar gallery allow a programme of monumentalisation there to be dated fairly securely to the years after 350.¹⁸ Two kilometres away, at Matagne-la-Petite, a new temple appears to have been built next to an existing one in the mid- to late 3rd c., while the first was then rebuilt around 370.¹⁹ The proximity of this site to Matagne-la-Grande, with its late construction date, suggests that local factors lay behind the unusual activity in this region. We know the area remained densely populated in the 4th c., when fortified sites and villas flourished. The case also fits into a wider pattern observed by Fauduet for north-eastern Gaul, where most late temple rebuilding occurs, and at least five cases post-date the invasions of the 270s.²⁰ The picture, then, is one of marked religious vitality in the north-east of Gaul during the later 3rd c., despite contemporary unrest. Meanwhile, although archaeological examples of rebuilding cease in the 5th c., Caesarius of Arles in the early 6th c. chastised his southern Gallic flock for not merely thwarting the demolition of existing pagan temples, but in some cases daring to rebuild them.²¹ Possibly the bishop was exaggerating his case, but the implication is that such activity was still plausible.

Temples in Gaul could, of course, pass out of use at any time. An example of early abandonment occurred in an urban milieu at

¹⁵ Cabuy (1991) 227–29; Cattelain *et al.* (2006); Paridaens *et al.* (2007). A similar case may be Chilly in the Somme, for which a late 3rd or 4th c. construction date has been suggested: Cadoux (1981).

¹⁶ Trier—Walters (1974) 27; Heinen (1985) 191–93. Bordeaux—Gaidon (1986). Vieu-en-Val-Romey and Les Bolards—Walters (1974) 10, 14.

¹⁷ Martin (1964).

¹⁸ Cattelain *et al.* (2006); Paridaens *et al.* (2007).

¹⁹ De Boe (1982); Cabuy (1991) 235.

²⁰ Cabuy (1991) 168; Fauduet (1993b) 120. Cf. also Rousselle (1990) 39–40 and 323–25 for water-sanctuaries and baths.

²¹ Caesarius *Serm.* 53.3.

Limoges: a short distance south-west of the city's forum, a partially-excavated building—probably a Romano-Celtic temple—served as a focus for offerings and vows from the Augustan period to the reign of Claudius at the latest.²² The site probably experienced an interruption in activity before its final abandonment, and then stood empty for up to half a century until built over by houses in the late 1st c. Why religious activity here ceased is uncertain, but it should be noted that Romano-Celtic sanctuaries are rarely found within the centres of cities in Gaul.²³ Possibly its construction was a phenomenon of the early urban experiment in Limoges, later considered out of keeping with the mature Gallo-Roman urban model.

The case at Limoges is rare, however. While some temples were abandoned during the 1st and 2nd centuries, most remained active until at least the 3rd. Fauduet's survey of Romano-Celtic temples revealed that out of 226 sites, where a reasonable chronological sequence could be established, only around 15 had certainly been abandoned by the end of the 1st c., but 34 more during the 2nd c., 57 during the 3rd, and 120 during the 4th c. or later.²⁴ If these numbers are expressed in terms of the proportion of temples active during each century, we find that 8% of Romano-Celtic temples functioning during the 1st c. had been abandoned by its end; during the 2nd c., 19% of active temples were abandoned, during the 3rd, 30%, and during the 4th, 79%.²⁵ Seventeen sites, mainly in Trier and north-east Gaul, apparently remained in use until the early years of the 5th c.²⁶ A similar picture emerges from a recent review of temple sites (all Romano-Celtic) in the Somme region.²⁷ Here, out of 39 sites dated on the basis of information from surface surveys, 11 had been abandoned at the beginning of the 4th c. and a further 14 by its end, leaving only five still in use in the early 5th c. Mithraea were apparently slightly more resilient, generally remaining in use until at least the end of the 4th c., while classical temples tended to be abandoned at the same time as

²² Maniquet and Loustaud (1999).

²³ Fauduet (1993a) 29–35; Goodman (2007) 133–37.

²⁴ Fauduet (1993b) 120. Rousselle's figures show a similar pattern—Rousselle (1990) 37–40 and 319–39.

²⁵ Calculations based on Fauduet (1993b) 119–20, checked against Sauer (2003) 127.

²⁶ Fauduet (1993a) 93; Fauduet (1993b) 120.

²⁷ Ben Redjeb *et al.* (2005) 204.

the surrounding urban landscape—the 3rd c. in some cases, but the 4th or even 5th in others.²⁸

Temple sites could be abandoned because the building had been deliberately destroyed, and these cases will be discussed below. The majority, though, appear to have ceased functioning without violent intervention. The causes of abandonment were sometimes local: accidental fires, landslides, floods or changes in sea-level.²⁹ But since, from the late 3rd c. onwards, abandonment became common across the region, wider causes like military invasions, economic hardship, religious change and imperial policy probably lie behind the pattern.³⁰

Incursions by so-called ‘barbarians’ began to affect Gaul seriously in the mid-3rd c., a period which saw first the establishment of the break-away Gallic Empire in 260, and then a wave of invasions after Roman rule had been re-established in 274.³¹ Temples do not appear to have been singled out for destruction by the attackers, although some were undoubtedly affected (see below). Yet this period saw a marked upswing in temple abandonment in all parts of Gaul except for the south, which was little affected by the raids.³² A link between the invasions and the abandonment of temple sites may thus be posited, but it need not be direct, especially since the abandonments continued after relative stability had been restored in the early 4th c.³³ Rather, the secondary effects of disruption to the regional economy and to settled populations should be considered. An important economic factor will have been impoverishment suffered by civic councils and individual members of the Gallo-Roman elite, whose financial input had always been essential for the maintenance of temples.³⁴ At the same time, other projects such as the construction of defensive

²⁸ Mithraea: Sauer (2003) 125. Classical temples: no systematic survey is available, but datable examples include Feurs (Valette and Guichard (1991) 148) and Lyon (Pelletier (1993) 117–18) in the 3rd c., and Dax (Wattier (1981)) and Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (Guyon *et al.* (1991) 94, 97) in the 4th.

²⁹ Fauduet (1993a) 93; Fauduet (1993b) 121. Changes in sea-level during this period include the Dunkirk II Transgression in the Flanders area after the 3rd c., which affected the temples of Dea Nehalennia at Domburg and Colijnsplaat: *Dea Nehalenniae* (1971); Thoen (1978).

³⁰ Fauduet (1993a) 92; Fauduet (1993b) 120.

³¹ Gallic empire—Drinkwater (1987). Invasions—Rousselle (1990) 45–49; Wilkes (2005) 220–24.

³² Fauduet (1993a) 92; Rousselle (1990) 37–40.

³³ Rousselle (1990) 46.

³⁴ Rousselle (1990) 61–62; Liebeschuetz (1992); Fauduet (1993b) 121; Caseau (2004) 110–12.

walls may have been accorded higher priority than temple repairs by town authorities and governors.³⁵

For Romano-Celtic temples, there is a noticeable relationship between location and date of abandonment, with decline in or around cities and large secondary settlements evident from the late 2nd c., but in more rural sites not until about a century later.³⁶ Arguably, then, temples located in the traditional centres of elite activity—particularly the city—were more vulnerable than those on its fringes. However, the effect should not be exaggerated. It applies only to Romano-Celtic temples, which were in any case usually situated on the urban periphery. Since existing occupation of all kinds in the periurban zone was almost always abandoned during the late 3rd and 4th c., it is not particularly surprising that Romano-Celtic temples situated there were also affected.³⁷ Classical temples, located in and around the forum, did not conform to the same pattern, instead following much the same trajectory as the secular buildings around them.³⁸ We may, then, be seeing a paring-down of communal interests and elite commitments in the context of increasing external pressures, to focus on a few temples with a particularly significant role in civic and political life. Away from the city, meanwhile, Rahtz and Watts have pointed out, in a British context, that humble rural temples would be easier to maintain than large and ornate urban ones, perhaps meaning that individuals willing to fund repairs could more readily be found.³⁹ But the longer survival of rural temples may also reflect the fact that Christianity established itself first in the cities, and took longer to reach rural communities.⁴⁰ Of further interest is the overall contrast between Gaul and Britain, where a similar lag between urban and rural sites is evident, but with Romano-British temple usage continuing for, on average, a century longer.⁴¹ Something about the different experiences of the two provinces must lie behind the pattern, although it is difficult to be sure whether the more peaceable experience of Britain during the 3rd c. or the slower rate of conversion to Christianity is more significant.

³⁵ Rousselle (1990) 40–44.

³⁶ Horne (1981) 25.

³⁷ Goodman (2007) 219–21.

³⁸ See above n. 29.

³⁹ Rahtz and Watts (1979) 183.

⁴⁰ Meeks (1983); Ferdière (2005) 363–67.

⁴¹ Horne (1981) 21–22.

Fauduet also observed that Romano-Celtic temples were generally abandoned earlier in the west of Gaul, where the population per square kilometre was lower than in other parts of the province.⁴² Meanwhile in the north-east, Gilles has argued that, despite the general pattern of rural sanctuaries outliving urban ones, the remoter hill-top temples were in fact abandoned before those in major cities like Trier.⁴³ Both observations suggest that temples whose usage and maintenance relied on small populations were more likely to be abandoned early. Nonetheless, the equation is not universal. The *vicus* at Clavier-Vervoz appears to have been abandoned after the invasions of the 3rd c., yet its associated temple complex remained in use until the late 4th.⁴⁴ An equation between temple abandonment and more general demographic change is harder to demonstrate, especially since the notion of dramatic population decline in late antique Gaul is increasingly under question. Although large numbers of traditional villa sites were clearly abandoned between the late 3rd and 5th c., research now suggests that this is because rural populations shifted to other locations, such as villages or wooden huts, rather than disappearing altogether.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the effects of imperial example, official legislation and the changing intellectual climate of the empire will also have been felt. With Constantine, imperial support for temple buildings ceased, and conversion to Christianity became for the first time politically attractive.⁴⁶ This certainly fits with the increasing abandonment of Gallic temples in the 4th c., but does not explain the marked decline in the number of active temples already observable in the late 3rd. Gratian's decree of 382 calling for the confiscation of all property used to maintain pagan cults and Theodosius' law of 392 banning pagan sacrifices constituted further substantial and telling blows.⁴⁷ However, most urban temples had already been abandoned by this period, while the surviving rural temples are unlikely to have held large estates. Beyond this, surviving legislation is of limited relevance to Gaul: most was initially directed to specific cities or provinces, and by the time it was compiled

⁴² Fauduet (1993a) 94.

⁴³ Gilles (1987).

⁴⁴ Cabuy (1991) 169.

⁴⁵ Percival (1976) 172–99; Percival (1992); Van Ossel (1992) 79, 125–27, 171–84; Ben Redjeb *et al.* (2005) 192–201; Ferdière (2005) 348–57.

⁴⁶ Rousselle (1990) 61–62; Beard *et al.* (1998) 375; Brown (1998) 652–653.

⁴⁷ Ward-Perkins (1984) 86; *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10.

into the *Codex Theodosianus* for circulation and application throughout the empire in 438, political power in Gaul was already shifting into Germanic hands.⁴⁸ But we might note laws from 397 allowing temple demolition to provide materials for public projects, from 399 encouraging the discreet demolition of rural temples to combat superstition, and from 425 commanding the demolition of all temples.⁴⁹

Temple demolition is indeed attested in Gaul, although, as for abandonment, this need not have been driven by imperial legislation; economic factors and a lack of interest in, or protection for, obsolete temples would have been enough. The sanctuary complex at Genainville, with its double-celled temple, provides a typical example: rebuilt and modified several times, the site became affected by rising water-levels in the early part of the 3rd c., and religious activity ceased there around 275.⁵⁰ A hearth containing Argonne pottery and a Constantinian coin attest modest domestic reoccupation in the 4th c., while the door of the north *cella* was blocked up with stone probably taken from another part of the temple; systematic demolition appears to have occurred mainly in the 5th c., affecting particularly the west gallery of the temple.

But temple demolition was laborious, as Christian iconoclasts found (see below). At Genainville, for example, the large foundation blocks of the west gallery were left in place, presumably because they were too much trouble to dig out. Many abandoned temples were simply left to stand empty, especially in remote locations or depopulated cities where the demand for stone was low. Autun in central Gaul, a large and important centre during the High Empire, suffered a marked decline from the 3rd c. onwards, so that the Medieval city occupied less than half the area of its Roman predecessor.⁵¹ Here, half the *cella* of the structure traditionally known as the Temple of Janus still stands to *ca.* 24 m: probably very near its original height.⁵² This temple probably owes its good state of preservation in part to its position a short distance from the urban centre, across the river Arroux: but even within the main city sacred monuments survived. A substantial

⁴⁸ Trombley (1993) 10; Honoré (1999); Ferdière (2005) 327–38.

⁴⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.36 (given to Asterius, Count of the East), 16.10.16 (posted at Damascus) and 16.10.25 (given at Constantinople).

⁵⁰ Fleury (1972); Fleury (1977); Mitard (1993).

⁵¹ Rebourg (1999) 143, 219–23.

⁵² Fauduet (1993a) 72.

segment of slightly curved wall still stands at the Place de Charmasse, and is conventionally identified as a temple to Apollo.⁵³

Literary sources, too, hint at a landscape littered with the remains of abandoned temples. Iznore, the birthplace around 449 of Saint Eugendus, was said to have been distinguished by a partially-ruined Temple of Mercury, while Saint Columbanus found statues of pagan deities peeping out of the undergrowth when he established a monastery at Luxeuil-les-Bains around 590.⁵⁴ In the 7th c., monks at Losne (Côte d'Or) reputedly found a temple on an island in the Saône well enough preserved to be converted directly into a church simply by reversing its still-standing statues.⁵⁵ From a Christian point of view, of course, these stories served a rhetorical purpose: the crumbling temples conclusively demonstrated the demise of pagan religion, their lavish decoration and solid masonry all in vain without the righteous vitality of the true faith.

Some temples may also have been actively preserved by civic authorities on account of their historical or political significance and their aesthetic contribution to the urban façade. Laws, such as those of Gratian in 376 forbidding the use of *spolia* from public monuments in Rome, and of Leo and Majorian in 458 ordering that civic monuments, including temples, should *not* be demolished, show that a willingness to preserve temples could apply in theory.⁵⁶ Indeed, one law forbidding the illicit demolition of public buildings, including temples, was given by Arcadius and Honorius in 399 to the Vicars of Spain and of the 'Five Provinces', which may have included parts of Gaul.⁵⁷ At Nîmes and Vienne, two temples of classical type—the Maison Carrée, originally dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar, and the Temple of Rome, Augustus and Livia—are famously well-preserved. This might be explained partly by local pride in the monuments, especially given their political relevance as centres of the imperial cult.⁵⁸

⁵³ Rebourg (1998) 194–95; Eumenius, *Panegyricus* 5.9–10.

⁵⁴ Iznore: *Vita Eugendi* (*Acta Sanctorum*, Jan. 1.50). For surviving remains associated with this reference—see Grenier (1958) 403–406. Luxeuil-les-Bains: Jonas *Vita Columbani* 1.10.

⁵⁵ Audin (1984) 83.

⁵⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.19; *Nov. Theod.* 4; Janvier (1969); Bayliss (2004) 51. Cf. also *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 (A.D. 382), in which temples in Osroene are kept open for aesthetic reasons—Trombley (1993) 17.

⁵⁷ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15; Pharr *et al.* (1952) 474 n. 31.

⁵⁸ Rivet (1988) 164, 309.

The abandonment of the temples did not necessarily mean that pagan religious practices ceased entirely during the 5th c.⁵⁹ Caesarius of Arles was as vehement in proscribing the use of trees and fountains as religious sites, the celebration of pagan festivals and the practice of augury and divination as he was in ordering the destruction of actual temples.⁶⁰ Pronouncements by the Merovingian Church councils continue to tell the same story throughout the 6th and early 7th centuries, repeatedly banning activities such as eating sacrificial meat, invoking pagan deities, going to sacred rocks, trees or springs, celebrating the Kalends of January, or consulting augurs.⁶¹ These sorts of activities would be unlikely to leave any trace in the archaeological record, but there is no reason to believe that in Gaul, as in many other parts of the empire, pagan and Christian rituals were not practised in parallel for several generations, and often by the same people.⁶²

VIOLENCE AND ICONOCLASM

Late antique literature abounds with stories of the deliberate, iconoclastic destruction of pagan temples by prominent Christian figures, often followed by the construction of a church on the same site.⁶³ On a literary level, such accounts must have evoked in their readers a vivid and reassuring sense of the triumph of Christianity over paganism. In doing so, they drew on well-established predecessors, including Old Testament stories of the smiting of idolatrous shrines, and perhaps also the classical motif of city destruction, visited upon irreconcilably hostile cities such as Troy, Carthage and Corinth.⁶⁴ Christian literature suggests that the elimination of pagan temples, especially those in

⁵⁹ Horne (1981) 25–26; Fauduet (1993a) 154.

⁶⁰ Caesarius *Serm.* 1.12, 12.13, 14.4, 53.1 and 54; Audin (1983).

⁶¹ Gaudement and Basdevant (1989): Orléans 2.20 (A.D. 533); Orléans 4.15–16 (A.D. 541); Tours 2.23 (22) (A.D. 567); Auxerre 1.3 and 4 (A.D. 561–605); Clichy 13 and 16 (A.D. 626–27). Further on the same theme is Vacandard (1899).

⁶² Fowden (1998) 542–43; Dierkens (1998) 54–55.

⁶³ Non-Gallic examples: Trombley (1993) 108–46, 213–18; Sauer (2003) 10–12; Caseau (2004) 120–34.

⁶⁴ Old Testament stories: e.g. 2 Kings 10.25–27 and 11.18 (Kinney (1999) 718). Classical motifs: Troy: Verg., *Aen.* 2 (amongst many others). Carthage: App., *Pun.* 95–130; Oros. 4.23.1–7. Corinth: Polyb. 39.15; Strabo 8.6.23; Paus. 2.1.1; Oros. 5.2–7. For the motif: Paul (1982); Ziolkowski (1993); Purcell (1995).

active use, was desirable on the grounds that they were inhabited by demons, and polluted both landscapes and communities, preventing the dissemination of the true faith.⁶⁵

Galic writers contributed freely to the genre. In the late 4th c., Sulpicius Severus devoted three chapters in the *Life* of his mentor and contemporary, Martin of Tours, to the bishop's destruction of pagan sacred sites, and returned to the topic in his *Dialogues*.⁶⁶ In total, Sulpicius credits Martin with the destruction of five temples, several altars and cult statues and a sacred pine tree, distributed over a number of locations in central Gaul.⁶⁷ Most of the stories stigmatise pagan religion, while demonstrating the superiority of the Christian faith in general and Martin in particular. Thus, unsophisticated locals attach disproportionate interest to a sacred tree, and frequently abuse or attack Martin in the course of his work—again with a Biblical precedent in the Ephesian reaction to the apostle Paul.⁶⁸ One local presbyter, Marcellus, finds himself unequal to the task of temple destruction which Martin has set him.⁶⁹ Martin, meanwhile, is able to command miraculous interventions which protect his own life, save neighbouring houses from fire, or directly demolish the temples. Every case ends with the establishment of a faithful Christian community, grateful for Martin's intervention. Sulpicius also suggests that church-building was an essential part of the process, stating that Martin regularly built churches and monasteries where he had destroyed temples.⁷⁰

Despite their obvious literary agenda, these stories should not be entirely dismissed as evidence for real activity. Sulpicius had met Martin, and could expect some of his readers to be familiar with the bishop's deeds. It is thus plausible that some Christians in late 4th c. Gaul were indeed engaged in the destruction of pagan temples. But, on the basis of evidence from outside Gaul, it would be unlikely for the practice to have been very widespread at this time. Serious official hostility

⁶⁵ Pagan deities as demons: Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 22. Pollution: August. *Ep.* 46; Maximus Taurin. *Serm.* 107; Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 2.3. Obstacles to Christianisation: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.16; Gallic Chronicle of 452, ch. 28 (Theodosius 8–9).

⁶⁶ Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 13–15, *Dial.* 3.8.

⁶⁷ Named locations are Levroux (Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 14), a village of the Aedui (*Vita* 15) and Amboise (*Dial.* 3.8).

⁶⁸ Pine tree: Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 13; attacks: *Vita* 13–15; Ephesian riot: Acts 19.23–41.

⁶⁹ Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 3.8.

⁷⁰ Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 13.

to polytheistic religion was only just beginning, and it was not until the end of the 4th c. that eastern emperors began actively calling for the destruction of pagan temples.⁷¹ Meanwhile, the presbyter Marcellus' complaint that temple destruction was too difficult for 'weak clerics or helpless monks', reminds us that the job was only possible at all with the help of significant manpower.⁷²

The theme of temple destruction emerges again in the literature of post-Roman Gaul. Caesarius of Arles urged his congregation to participate in the destruction of temples, and admonished those resisting destruction by others.⁷³ But while Sulpicius' Martin operated in a world divided between traditional pagan communities and the agents of Christ, Caesarius' main concern was apparently to prevent a broadly Christianised population from practising pagan worship as well—a reflection of the growth in Christianity's prominence which had occurred in the intervening century. A generation later, Gregory of Tours, naturally familiar with the stories of his predecessor Martin, included a temple-burning incident at Cologne-Köln in the early life of his uncle, Bishop Gallus of Clermont-Ferrand.⁷⁴ Like Martin, Gallus met with armed resistance, despite his attempts to burn the temple clandestinely. But he was saved by his patron, Theoderic I, rather than the intervention of God—this a cause for regret in his later life. Finally, the *Life* of Saint Radegund, composed by a fellow nun between 600 and 602, relates the story of a roadside shrine which the queen ordered to be burnt.⁷⁵ She, too, was violently resisted, but, inspired by Christ, remained unmoved and prayed, so that the locals were pacified and inspired to worship God by her example. A distinct literary formula had developed, shared by Gallic and non-Gallic writers alike, but this does not mean that the literary model was not one to which real individuals aspired.⁷⁶

⁷¹ See above nn. 48 and 50.

⁷² Sulp. *Sev. Dial.* 3.8. On the difficulties of temple-destruction elsewhere, see Trombley (1993) 123–125; Caseau (2004) 127–30.

⁷³ Caesarius *Serm.* 14.4 and 53.

⁷⁴ Gregory of Tours, *Hist.* 1.39 and 10.31.3 refer directly to Martin's destruction of pagan temples. Temple-burning: Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum* 6.2.

⁷⁵ Baudonivia, *Vita Radegundis* 2.2.

⁷⁶ Sauer (2003) 13. Related stories of statue destruction include: *Vita Romani* 9 (Analecta Bollandiana 5 (1886) 177–89) and Gregory of Tours, *Hist.* 8.15 and *Gloria Confessorum* 76.

Reconciling such stories with archaeological evidence for the violent destruction of sanctuaries is notoriously difficult, however.⁷⁷ A small number of temple sites in Gaul *have* yielded evidence for violent destruction, but distinguishing between Christian iconoclasm and the effects of accidents, barbarian invaders, economically motivated plundering or indeed solicitous pagans seeking to hide their own religious statuary, is often impossible. We can see the broken statuary, fire layers or buried artefacts, yet cannot see the thought-processes behind them. In 1950, Emile Mâle, basing his arguments on the account of Sulpicius, and coin-sequences ending in the late 4th c., was eager to identify the handiwork of Martin of Tours in temple sites which had yielded finds of broken statuary and/or were located under churches, but his conclusions now appear insufficiently robust.⁷⁸ It is no longer considered acceptable to use the year of issue of the latest coin found on a site to date the cessation of activity there.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, as Mâle himself admits, none of the churches which he wishes to attribute to Saint Martin can be proven to have existed as early as the 4th c.⁸⁰

More rigorous analysis of the evidence for deliberate temple destruction has recently been undertaken by Eberhard Sauer.⁸¹ Sauer recognises the difficulties of distinguishing between Christian iconoclasm and other forms of violent disruption, but has formulated a number of criteria suggestive of religiously-motivated vandalism, based on literary accounts of iconoclasm and the evidence of sites where destruction is known to have been perpetrated for religious reasons.⁸² These include signs that unusual effort was expended in the destruction process, cases where overtly pagan or naked images have suffered greater damage than other art works, evidence that valuable objects such as coins have been left in situ, and the construction of churches on temple sites soon after a violent attack.⁸³ In total, Sauer cites seven religious sites in Gaul

⁷⁷ For debates on this topic, see Sauer (1996); Sauer (2003); Bayliss (2004); plus Stewart (1999) and Croxford (2003) on similar debates around statuary.

⁷⁸ Mâle (1950) 34–39. Mâle was also strongly influenced by the late 19th c. work of Bulliot and Thiollier on Saint Martin (Bulliot and Thiollier 1889–92). Criticism of Mâle: Caillet (1996) 196; Young (1997) 243–46; Young (2001) 173–75.

⁷⁹ Collis (1988); Rousselle (1990) 33–35.

⁸⁰ Mâle (1950) 40.

⁸¹ Sauer (1996); Sauer (2003).

⁸² Sauer (2003) 23–44, esp. 38.

⁸³ In support of the assumption that barbarian raiding usually involved the looting of valuable items, see Künzl (1993) on materials lost in a branch of the Rhine at Neupotz, *ca.* A.D. 277/78.

where deliberate destruction can be plausibly attributed to Christian iconoclasm—five mithraea at Les Bolards, Martigny, Sarrebourg, Seps-teuil and Trier's Altbachtal complex, and two hill-top sanctuaries at Tawern and Hochscheid in the Trier region.⁸⁴ At all of them, religious images had been systematically smashed, while in each of the mithraea large numbers of coins had also been left behind. An eighth possible case may be added at Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer, where a villa-shrine was demolished and its cult statue broken up and thrown down a well.⁸⁵

These sites can readily be interpreted in terms of Christian iconoclasm, then, although we can never be certain of the reasons for their destruction. The dating in most cases appears to be very late in the history of pagan religious architecture in Gaul. The one exception is Hochscheid, where the sanctuary was probably abandoned in the 270s, but with surviving statues smashed some time later, after considerable degradation of the built structures had occurred.⁸⁶ The other sites, however, appear to have remained in active use right up to the time of their destruction, with coin and pottery sequences continuing until the very end of the 4th c. As Sauer points out, this does not necessarily date the end of religious activity, or the destruction of the sites precisely; coinage and readily datable pottery both disappear *en masse* from northern Gaul, Germany and Britain at exactly this time, so that their absence from a particular site cannot be taken as definitive evidence for the end of human activity there.⁸⁷ But it does show that the sites were *not* destroyed before the end of the 4th c., and this may have happened later.

In other cases, destruction is harder to attribute convincingly to particular perpetrators. A spring-sanctuary with significant mithraic sculpture at Mackwiller was burnt and its statuary smashed in the 350s, thus slightly earlier than the examples above.⁸⁸ The event might plausibly be associated with the Alamannic incursions of that decade, but a ceramic vessel containing 404 coins was left on the temple floor—perhaps more typical of Christian iconoclasts. Similarly, a pair of temples at Côtes near Clermont-Ferrand were broken up and burnt in

⁸⁴ Sauer (2003), 73–78, 149–50 and 157–59.

⁸⁵ Eblé (1948); Percival (1976) 186–87.

⁸⁶ Weisgerber (1975); Sauer (2003) 75–78.

⁸⁷ Reece (1980) 117–18; Sauer (1996) 28–30, 51; Sauer (2003) 73–74, 151.

⁸⁸ Sauer (1996) 22–23, 53–54.

the 270s.⁸⁹ The date again tallies with contemporary incursions, but surrounding shops and houses were left unharmed, perhaps suggesting religious violence after all. Conversely, a Romano-Celtic temple at Crain suffered the characteristically iconoclastic fate of conflagration and image-breaking, probably in the late 4th c.⁹⁰ But here, a sunken stone offertory box before the temple entrance *had* been partially robbed of its coins, although not necessarily at the same time as the temple was destroyed. The destruction at any of these sites, then, could have been carried out by hostile invaders, Christians, or both.

Some Gallic temples clearly did suffer deliberate destruction. Usually, it caused the end of religious activity on the site, and it appears to have occurred particularly in and after the late 4th c. In some cases, it may have resulted from the religious iconoclasm described in contemporary literature, but the identity of the perpetrators is never certain, and 'barbarians' may also have contributed.⁹¹ Temples of Mithras seem particularly vulnerable to violent attacks. Sauer's six clear examples of the phenomenon equate with half of the eleven mithraea securely identified in Gaul. In fact, he argues that in some regions, mithraism was particularly targeted by Christian iconoclasts.⁹² But other factors may also have been at work. If the deliberate destruction of religious sites occurred mainly in or after the late 4th c., it would have been unlikely to affect Romano-Celtic or classical temples very profoundly, since the great majority of them had already been abandoned by the end of that century. In fact, even including the most ambiguous examples, no more than ten non-mithraic temples can be claimed to have undergone violent destruction—thus a tiny proportion of the roughly 700 known in Gaul overall.⁹³ The literary testimony for violent clashes between Christians and pagans, then, needs tempering, at least insofar as it manifested itself through the destruction of pagan sacred buildings. We may postulate a more peaceable progression from polytheistic

⁸⁹ Eychart (1973), esp. 94.

⁹⁰ Sauer (2003) 154–56.

⁹¹ Cf. Gregory of Tours' report of the destruction of a temple near Clermont-Ferrand by the Alamannic king Chrocus (*Hist.* 1.32), and archaeological remains at Vasso de Jaude which may perhaps be associated with it: Fournier (1965); Fournier and Lapeyre (1972); Vieillard-Troiekouroff (1976) 103–104; Horne (1980) 25; Sauer (2003) 54–55.

⁹² Sauer (1996) 79–80; Sauer (2003) 84–85.

⁹³ For a similar picture in Italy, see Ward-Perkins (1984) 85.

to Christian religious activity than the texts suggest. Indeed, it is not necessary to believe that the practitioners of each were always starkly distinct, let alone opposed.⁹⁴

CHURCH CONVERSIONS

What of Sulpicius Severus' claim that 'wherever he destroyed temples, there at once he [St Martin] would build either churches or monasteries'?⁹⁵ Mâle took this statement to mean that Martin was in the habit of building churches directly on the ruins of the temples he had destroyed, but Sulpicius' words ('*ubi fana... ibi aut ecclesias aut monasteria*') do not necessarily imply a direct reuse of the site.⁹⁶ They could equally mean that a church was built in the same village or region. We lack a direct Gallic equivalent of Gregory the Great's advice to Saint Augustine in Britain to exorcise pagan temples and reuse them for Christian worship.⁹⁷ On the other hand, Gregory's pragmatism reveals a flexible attitude which might equally have applied elsewhere. Certainly, some churches had been built over demolished temples outside Gaul since the Constantinian era, while standing structures also began to be used from the end of the 4th c.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Sulpicius is clear about why church-building was so desirable in the aftermath of a temple demolition: thanks to Martin, previously heathen populations flocked *en masse* to the new churches. Thus there was an interest in Christianising the existing sacred landscape in Gaul. This is perhaps reflected, too, in Gregory of Tours' story about a bishop of Javols who redirected local worship away from a large lake by constructing a relic-church to Saint Hilarius.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Cf. the congregation of Caesarius of Arles, above. Finds of Christian material on pagan sites include a blue glass ring with a Chi-Rho symbol found in the Matagne-la-Grande sanctuary (Paridaens *et al.* (2007)). It need not, of course, have been deposited by a practising Christian.

⁹⁵ Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 13.

⁹⁶ Mâle (1950) 34.

⁹⁷ Bede *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* 1.30; Gregory the Great, *Epistulae* 11.56.

⁹⁸ Churches over temples: Hanson (1978) 258–63; Trombley (1993) 112–14; Caillet (1996) 195–96; Caseau (2004) 132. Use of standing structures: Hanson (1978) 264–65; Caillet (1996) 199–201; Ward-Perkins (2003); Bayliss (2004) 50–57.

⁹⁹ Gregory of Tours *Gloria Confessorum* 2.

Archaeology reveals that some temples of the Roman era were indeed either built over by or incorporated into Christian churches. Fauduet found that the sites of about 12 Romano-Celtic temples saw some form of Christian reuse, to which may be added at least three classical examples (see below), but no mithraea.¹⁰⁰ The relationship between temple and church is seldom direct, however. Usually there is a significant hiatus between the abandonment of the temple and the installation of the church, while in some cases the church is built not directly over the temple itself, but nearby.¹⁰¹

A well-documented example is the church of Saint-Georges at Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville near Rouen.¹⁰² Here, a Romano-Celtic temple flourished from the 1st c. until at least the second half of the 3rd, and may have been used until the end of the 4th c. or later. The site was then abandoned but not demolished, and in the mid-7th c. became the focus of a cemetery. Although the temple gallery had probably collapsed by this point, the presence of a drain for collecting gutter water suggests that the *cella* itself was not only still standing, but still roofed. It may also have been modified by blocking up its existing doorway and creating a new one. This would suggest that it had already begun to function as a Christian funerary chapel, a role for which it was further modified in or after the first half of the 8th c. by the extension of its east and west walls to form a rectangular building. By the 11th c., this had become known as the church of Saint-Georges, and was extended into a longer, cross-shaped building, still including the north and south walls of the original temple.

A related, but less direct, case is Civaux in Poitou-Charentes, where a temple of Romano-Celtic type was still undergoing modifications at an uncertain late date, possibly the second half of the 4th c.¹⁰³ The end of pagan religious activity on the site is undated, but it became surrounded by a vast necropolis during the 5th to 7th c. A baptismal pool was cut into the northern aisle of the temple's gallery, while a Merovingian predecessor of the present-day church of Saint Gervais et Saint Protais appears to have been built along its southern edge. Only an apse now survives from this building, but parts of the north wall

¹⁰⁰ Romano-Celtic temples: Fauduet (1993b) 121. Classical temples: Sauer (2003) 158.

¹⁰¹ Caillet (1996) 201–202; Young (1997) 250. For similar cases elsewhere, Bayliss (2004) 58–64.

¹⁰² Le Maho (1985); Duval (1991) 189–91; Le Maho (1998).

¹⁰³ Eygun (1961); Eygun (1963).

of its 10th or 11th c. successor still rest on the southernmost foundations of the temple. Thus the temple itself was never over-built by a church, but found a role as a baptistery for a new church constructed alongside it.¹⁰⁴

Similar sequences occurred at Anthée in Belgium, Tavigny-Saint-Martin in Luxembourg, and probably also at Mont Dardon in central Gaul as well as at the mithraeum of Vieu-en-Val-Romey in Rhône-Alpes.¹⁰⁵ But this development of temple into cemetery, and cemetery into Christian cult building, differs from Sulpicius Severus' vision of the immediate replacement of temples with churches as a means of Christianisation. In fact, it appears more akin to the similar and well-attested phenomenon of burials in and around other abandoned buildings—especially villas—in Late Antiquity, which itself often gave rise to the construction of an associated church.¹⁰⁶ In such cases we might even question whether, by the time a Christian sacred building had been established on the site, there remained any distinct memory of its original pagan character.¹⁰⁷ Rather, the appearance of the church is best explained in terms of its funerary function. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of burial around temples suggests that many individuals in this era were less concerned about being polluted by demons than certain members of the literary elite; perhaps they wished to perpetuate the memory of past sacred sites, despite their own changed beliefs.¹⁰⁸ Percival has also argued that many of the villa sites used in this way in Gaul in fact had domestic religious associations themselves.¹⁰⁹ Beyond this, the same practical factors which prompted burials in and around secular ruins will have applied—for example, the presence of reusable stone.

In a small number of cases, temple sites were apparently reused by churches without an intervening funerary phase. At Aime in the

¹⁰⁴ Similar examples in Africa—Caillet (1996) 198.

¹⁰⁵ Anthée—Dierkens (1998) 42. Tavigny—Mertens and Matthys (1971). Mont Dardon—Green *et al.* (1987) 53–65; Young (1997) 247–48. Vieu-en-Val-Romey—Walters (1974) 5–11.

¹⁰⁶ Gaul: Percival (1976) 178–79, 183–99; Le Maho (1990). Britain: Morris and Roxan (1980). Italy: di Gennaro and Griesbach (2003).

¹⁰⁷ For creative medieval reinterpretations of pagan mythology: Chevallier (1983) 305–306. For invented aetiologies attached to ancient ruins in medieval Rome see the *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*.

¹⁰⁸ Bayliss (2004) 59, citing anthropological studies of similar behaviour in modern populations.

¹⁰⁹ Percival (1976) 185–91.

Saône-et-Loire district, a Romano-Celtic temple floor and altar base have been found beneath the chapel of Saint Sigismond.¹¹⁰ Courses of well-built *petit appareil* at the bases of the present chapel walls suggest that its earliest predecessor was built over the original temple in the late antique era, probably the 5th c. Elsewhere, the round *cella* of a temple at Moûtiers, Savoie, was half-demolished in the 5th or 6th c., to leave a semi-circular structure which was then incorporated into the cathedral as an apse.¹¹¹ In other cases, church construction came much later: at Bibracte, for example, Mâle was right to say that a chapel was built over the remains of a Romano-Celtic temple, but this reuse cannot be dated earlier than the 8th c.¹¹² Similarly, the platform of a large Romano-Celtic temple at Elst was directly reused by a Christian church in the early 8th c., while in the 11th c., one of a pair of classical-style temples at Vernègues, Bouches-du-Rhône, provided most of the walls necessary for a chapel to Saint Césaire.¹¹³

In southern Gaul, two temples of classical type were reused as churches with little modification, although again following a significant hiatus. The Temple of Rome, Augustus and Livia near the forum at Vienne had certainly become the church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Vie by the 11th c.¹¹⁴ The monument was restored to its classical form in the mid-19th c., but earlier engravings show walls inserted between the peripteral columns around the *cella* which may be of 6th c. date. The Maison Carrée at Nîmes, too, served its time as a church, but only as one episode in a long series of transformations.¹¹⁵ From the 11th to 16th c., it served as a residence for the 'consuls' of the city, for which purpose the open colonnade at the front of the temple podium was closed, and the inside of the *cella* subdivided into two floors lit by newly-cut windows. For at least part of the same period, it also hosted a small chapel known as Saint-Etienne de Capdueil. Subsequently, it served as a private house and animal shelter, an Augustinian church, and a political office once again during the late 18th and early 19th c. To round the story off, the temple has now been restored, and found a new vocation as a tourist attraction. In part, its astonishing history

¹¹⁰ Leglay (1973) 542.

¹¹¹ Koethe (1933) 47; Audin (1984) 103.

¹¹² Goudineau and Peyre (1993) 84–89.

¹¹³ Elst—Bogaers (1955); Vernègues—Audin (1984) 81.

¹¹⁴ Descombes (1978) 270; Descombes *et al.* (1986) 34.

¹¹⁵ Balty (1960) 9–62.

can be explained by the size of the temple. With a solidly-built *cella* measuring 16 × 11 m internally, it provided an unusually versatile space for modification. But size is not all: other classical temples with larger *cellae* were not similarly exploited. The Maison Carrée must be a particularly lucky beneficiary of both lack of interest in its materials and pride in its appearance, combined in just the right measure.

Finally, temples might also contribute to the church-building process in the form of *spolia*. Literary sources from outside Gaul suggest that in the 4th c., this might be done to demonstrate the Church's victory over polytheistic religion without building on a polluted temple site.¹¹⁶ Once the supremacy of Christianity was assured, however, attitudes apparently became more relaxed. Many medieval French churches used sculptural material of an obviously pagan character, such as inscribed altars or reliefs, for decorative purposes—at once demonstrating a connection with the past and a progression beyond its primitive beliefs.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, on a more practical level, *spolia* was also used in less visible places, like foundations, where it provided a cheap but solid building material.¹¹⁸

The small number of temple to church conversions described above, and their often indirect nature, would have surprised Mâle, who confidently identified dozens of French churches as the direct successors of pagan temples.¹¹⁹ But Mâle's examples are generally based on flimsy evidence: medieval traditions, sculptural material only, structural remains not securely identified as from temples, or churches built so late that the original temple site was probably no longer identifiable. As Audin and Young have both pointed out, such examples do not stand up to modern scrutiny, especially in an urban setting, where almost any building is inevitably sited over older structures, and coincidence alone will guarantee that some churches overlie the sites of ancient temples.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Audin (1984) 67–68; Caseau (2004) 129–34; Bayliss (2004) 43–44.

¹¹⁷ Mâle (1950) 66–69; Chevallier (1983) 294, 302; Audin (1984) with catalogued examples at Lhuis, Orgon, Mavilly-Mandelot, Langon, Suèvres and Saint-Semin-du-Bois; Fauduet (1993a) 96–97; Dierkens (1998) 42–43.

¹¹⁸ Audin (1984) 67–68 and examples at Saint-Ambroix, Yzeures, Vienne-en-Val and Chalon-sur-Saône; Esperandieu (1961) 126–37 (also Yzeures).

¹¹⁹ Mâle (1950) 40–42.

¹²⁰ Audin (1984) 65 and 67–68; Young (1988) 221–35; Young (1997) 243–45; Young (2001) 173–75.

As for the issue of iconoclastic destruction, then, some of the temples of Roman Gaul were in one form or another reused as Christian buildings, although the numbers involved are small, and transformations were often either temporally or spatially indirect. This is not surprising, since the architecture of polytheistic temples meant that they were ill-suited to the needs of Christian congregations. As Deichmann pointed out in one of the first systematic treatments of the issue, pagan temples were designed to house cult images while their worshippers remained outside, whereas Christian churches needed a large internal space for communal worship.¹²¹ Besides, temples were only one type of obsolete building whose walls or stone could contribute to the construction of a church: baths or basilicas with their large interior halls were arguably more suitable and they were indeed used.¹²² Houses and villas, too, were frequently bequeathed to the Church, providing a readily-convertible structure, of particular value in a built-up area.¹²³ But even secular conversions were never widespread. On the whole, the sacred topography of Christian Gaul was forged independently of the pagan landscape which had preceded it.¹²⁴

OTHER FORMS OF REUSE

A further 37 Romano-Celtic temples in Gaul experienced other forms of reuse. The most common was as a focus for burials, known in at least 13 cases.¹²⁵ This has already been discussed in the context of church conversions, but the point should be made that the installation of a church was not inevitable. The temple of Tronche-Bélon at Riaz in Switzerland became the focus of a cemetery after its abandonment in the early 4th c., but no church is known here.¹²⁶ At least nine temples saw domestic (re)occupation, usually in the form of hearths or lean-to structures.¹²⁷ In the north-east corner of a *temenos* gallery at Loubers, near Toulouse, for example, a series of post-holes indicate the erection of a lean-to shelter, probably in the late 3rd c., and certainly

¹²¹ Deichmann (1939) 114.

¹²² Hanson (1978) 266; Duval (1991) 187–89; Février (1995); Caillet (1996) 192–94; Young (1997) 242.

¹²³ Duval (1991) 190.

¹²⁴ Young (1988) 235–37; Young (1997) 245–47; Young (2001) 178–80.

¹²⁵ Fauduet (1993b) 121; cf. also two examples in Ben Redjeb *et al.* (2005) 204.

¹²⁶ Schwab (1975).

¹²⁷ Fauduet (1993a) 97–98; Fauduet (1993b) 122.

after the complex had been abandoned.¹²⁸ Subsequently, the floor in the same corner of the gallery was covered over with a layer of tiles and rubble, and fires were lit for cooking meat, around which a large scattering of coins and personal artefacts from across the 4th c. were found. Apparently, the disused temple site saw a century or more of domestic occupation, although the identity of its residents is unknown.

Often, domestic occupation was connected with demolition and quarrying. This was the case at Genainville, discussed above.¹²⁹ Such activity can be seen archaeologically through the presence of robber trenches, as at Genainville, or lime kilns, as at Jouars-Pontchartrain and Estrées-Saint-Denis, and of course this is how the *spolia* found in Christian churches was generated.¹³⁰ Reclaimed temple materials were used in other structures, too. Stone from the Tour de Vésone, Périgueux, went into the city's reduced walled circuit in the 3rd c., while the sanctuary at Matagne-la-Grande in Belgica provided materials for the nearby Château de Fagnolle in the 12th.¹³¹ Temples reused in this manner did not constrain the choice of site for the new building, since the *spolia* were portable. But standing structures were also incorporated into new buildings: baths at Sanxay, a market at Champigny-les-Lan-gres, and fortifications at Champlieu.¹³² The practice continued into the Medieval and Early Modern eras, with Villeteureix in the Dordogne being the most spectacular example.¹³³ Here, a round temple of probable 2nd c. date still stands to a height of 10.8 m; it was already surrounded by domestic buildings in the 16th c., and in the 17th became a turret at one end of the rectangular château of la Rigale.¹³⁴

CONCLUSION

The story of the temples in Gaul during Late Antiquity naturally reflects the wider changes and events which affected the province in this period, but often indirectly. A marked increase in the rate of

¹²⁸ Bessou (1978) 196–97.

¹²⁹ Fleury (1972); Fleury (1977); Mitard (1993).

¹³⁰ Blin (2000); Woimant (2002).

¹³¹ Périgueux: Grenier (1958) 674. Matagne-la-Grande: Paridaens *et al.* (2007).

¹³² Fauduet (1993a) 97–98; Fauduet (1993b) 121; Grenier (1958) 407–15 (Champlieu).

¹³³ Others include Eysse: Koethe (1933) 94 and plate 7; and Juillé: Fauduet (1993a)

72.

¹³⁴ Koethe (1933) 53–54 and plate 3.

temple abandonment occurred from the later 3rd c.—the very period when hostile incursions began to trouble the province. Yet there is little evidence for the direct destruction of temple sites by the invaders. In fact, temples in the worst affected areas—northern and eastern Gaul—typically survived longer than those in the west. If temple abandonment was connected with barbarian invasions, it is more likely to be because the invasions contributed to general political and financial instability, causing the elite (upon whose support temple maintenance mainly rested) to rethink their priorities. Meanwhile, the rise of Christianity of course affected the temples of polytheistic deities. But both the conversion of Constantine and the increasingly hostile laws of the late 4th c. came well after the heyday of Gaul's pagan temples had already passed. Similarly, despite vivid literary accounts of temple destruction, it would seem that a small minority of sites actually experienced this fate; far more were left to crumble undisturbed, were demolished for practical reasons or were converted to new functions. And while some did eventually become churches, we must now accept that this was a much less widespread or direct process than the romantic visions of previous generations have often suggested.

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FANA, TEMPLA, DELUBRA DESTRUI PRAECIPIMUS:
THE END OF THE TEMPLES IN ROMAN SPAIN

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Abstract

The Theodosian Code (16.1) preserves a series of imperial laws which aimed to suppress pagan sacrifices and remove cult idols during the 4th c. At the same time other imperial legislation recommended that the temple buildings themselves needed to be maintained in the cities, as both emblematic and useful buildings. This article seeks to analyse, using all the available sources (literary, archaeological, legislative), the problem of the end of pagan temples in Hispania. We can conclude that these structures were not transformed into churches—if at all—until the 6th and 7th centuries. Some were abandoned in the 4th c., others became houses or were reused in other ways, and it is only from the 5th c. that there is good archaeological evidence for the use of Spanish temple spoils in other buildings.

THE DESTRUCTION OF PAGAN TEMPLES

Towards the middle of the 5th c. A.D., the imposing Temple of the goddess Aphrodite in Aphrodisias in Caria was transformed into a Christian church, and was later converted into the city's cathedral.¹ The work required to transform this ancient temple into a Christian place of worship was considerable: it involved the dismantlement of the internal *cella*, the construction of an external precinct with an apsed end and the relocation of 12 columns from the complex to an extension of the nave. The remaining columns (26 in all) served to separate the nave and aisles. As Ward-Perkins notes, "a visitor to Aphrodisias after the building's transformation, probably would not have perceived that it had previously been a pagan temple".² Similarly, probably in the second half of the 6th c., the Parthenon at Athens was converted

¹ On this theme of conversion, see Ward-Perkins (1999), esp. 234–36.

² Ward-Perkins (1999) 235.

into a church, just as other temple sites were in the city, namely the Hephaisteion in the agora, and the Asklepieion situated at the foot of the Acropolis, both in the 7th c. The Erechtheion was also converted (figs. 2, 3).³ At Rome, the first recorded instance of a temple being converted into a church comes at the start of the 7th c., in A.D. 609, when the Pantheon became a church, consecrated in honour of the Virgin Mary and all the martyrs, and was subsequently referred to as the Church of S. Maria ad Martyres in the 7th c.⁴ On this occasion the structural changes were minimal; an altar was simply installed in the principal apse, which was designed to hold an icon of the Virgin and Child.

From these few examples of a much wider phenomenon,⁵ we can observe a set of constants. Firstly, the cost and investment of effort in the process of dismantling a building and reusing it. This was recognised by Libanius, an author contemporary to such events. His discourse, *Pro Templis*, is directed at the emperor Theodosius, reproaching him and his policy of permitting the demolition of pagan cult structures, claiming that ‘the demolition [of a temple] is as laborious as its construction –there was such difficulty to separate the stones which had been bonded with such strong mortar’.⁶ Secondly, the examples above show one of the ways in which 4th and 5th c. imperial legislation, that sought to preserve these old buildings, was implemented. One law of A.D. 342, directed at Aco(nius) Catullinus, *praefectus urbis Romae*, says that ‘all types of superstition must be totally eliminated, although we demand, without exception, that those temple buildings (*aedes templorum*) situated outside the walls of the cities should remain intact and preserved (*intactae incorruptaeque consistent*)’.⁷ In a similar vein are the laws *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 of A.D. 382 and *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15, the latter of which is directed at the Spanish provinces, as it is written to Macrobius, *vicarius Hispaniarum* in 399, and requests: ‘in the same way that We prohibit sacrifices, in the same way We require

³ Ward-Perkins (1999) 235–40; Camp (2001) 235–38; plus Deichmann (1938–39); Korrés (1994a); Holtzmann (2003) 243f.

⁴ Krautheimer (1980) 72: the Byzantine emperor Phocas donated the building to Pope Boniface IV.

⁵ Key studies are Deichmann (1939) and (1954), with useful comments also from Greenhalgh (1989).

⁶ *Lib. Or.* 30.38.

⁷ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3.

that the ornaments of those public buildings be preserved (*publicorum operum ornamenta servari*).⁸ This effort to maintain the temples was what pagans like Libanius sought: 'If we must protect all parts of our cities, if our cities owe their fame to the temples in particular, and if those temples are... the greatest pride, so we should give them the greatest attention and be sensitive in maintaining them as part of the fabric of the cities. They are, after all, buildings, whether or not they are used as temples'.⁹ This awareness of the need for the material preservation of both cities and their temples forms a significant part of the later imperial legislation.¹⁰

In spite of the costs involved in temple conversion, there was clearly a symbolic significance in transforming a pagan space into a Christian one. In spite of this, the Christian conversion of temples into churches only began from the mid-5th c., although there were a few earlier cases in the eastern empire.¹¹ Krautheimer writes: "It is strange that over 200 years had elapsed after the closing by law of the pagan sanctuaries before a temple of Rome was converted [into a church—i.e. the Pantheon]".¹² This anomaly means that several possible motives may lie behind temple destruction: (i) temples were destroyed or razed as an expression of fanaticism and intolerance by certain Christians; (ii) temples were slowly and deliberately dismantled in order to reuse their materials (*spolia*) in other buildings or for other purposes (such as lime-burning); (iii) they were simply abandoned, a process which perhaps began before the 4th c.¹³ In this way, a temple could have lain empty and unused and deprived of meaning, but with the building still being respected; (iv) temples were abandoned but still respected by Christians, if only for practical reasons, something we get a hint of within

⁸ Key bibliography for the laws includes: Saradi-Mendelovici (1990); Kunderewicz (1971); Lepelley (1994a) and (1994b); Klein (1995).

⁹ Lib. *Or.* 30.42.

¹⁰ Cf. *Cod. Theod.* 15.1–53 (*de operibus publicis*), where the emperors repeatedly order the provincial governors to engage in maintaining the urban edifices and to effect repairs before undertaking any new works.

¹¹ Cf. Arce (2005) 245, citing Lib. *Ep.* 1364 (of A.D. 363).

¹² Krautheimer (1980) 72. The author recognised the earlier occurrences in the East, but for the West as happening chiefly from the 6th c., adding that "for some reason Rome remained reluctant".

¹³ For example, Plin. *Ep.* 10.96.10 speaks of temples already abandoned in his time in some of the eastern provinces: '...iam desolata templa...et sacra sollemnia diu intermissa...'.

the imperial legislation and in some Christian writers; (v) temples were abandoned but then exploited for other functions, such as housing, workshops or storage spaces; or, lastly, (vi) they were transformed into churches. This may have occurred after some of the changes above.

THE CASE OF HISPANIA

To what degree can the phenomenon of the end of the temples be studied in depth in the case of the provinces of Late Roman *Hispania*? In the Roman urban context, the temples represented the protectors or guardians of the city and its citizens, in the same way that, as Libanius claims, they were the 'soul of the fields' in the countryside.¹⁴ The temples were the physical manifestations of these divine protectors. The destiny, defence, health and security of the city and its inhabitants was intimately linked to their existence and the worship of the deities they represented. The importance of the sacrifices outside temples, the festivals, as well as the other functions a temple had—such as foci for political gatherings, centres for debate and commerce, as well as being places to store public treasures (*tameion*)—reflect this valuable civic role; temples were not purely religious centres.¹⁵ When we look at the laws promulgated by Christian emperors from the 4th c. we see that they were principally aiming to prohibit the cults and their sacrifices that took place in the temple grounds and were not calling for the destruction or demolition of the temple itself.

In fact, no imperial decrees ordering temple destruction appear before A.D. 435.¹⁶ One law of 399, sent to the proconsul of Africa, specifically stresses that the buildings are not to be victims: *Decernimus enim, ut aedificium quidem sit interger status*.¹⁷ Furthermore, in 407, a decree states that temples found in the cities, the *oppida* and beyond, have been approved for public use (*aedificia ipsa templorum...ad usum publicum vindicentur*).¹⁸ Yet in the same law the destruction of altars is

¹⁴ Lib. *Or.* 30.4 and 9.

¹⁵ On festivals, see Scullard (1981) and Salzman (1990) for 4th c. forms; other functions are considered in Stambaugh (1978) and MacMullen (1988) 97–98.

¹⁶ Saradi-Mendelovici (1990). E.g. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.6 and 8 of A.D. 382, expressly requiring that the city's temple, a traditional point of meetings, must remain open: '... *patere templum permittat*...'.
¹⁷ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.18—here referring directly to the temple at Carthage.

¹⁸ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.19.

ordered—along with the demolition of those temples used for other purposes, although those purposes are not specified (*ad usu adcommodos transferantur*)—as well as temples that were part of private houses and villas.¹⁹ As we have said though, we need to wait until A.D. 435 to find a law expressly ordering all urban temple destruction. This law suggested that temples should be purified by having a cross placed on their grounds. This implies that the temple could be destroyed, but could also be purified by this simple act. As such, a temple could be Christianised but still maintain its former appearance and structural integrity.²⁰ Similarly, *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 (A.D. 399) directed at the *vicarius Hispaniarum* Macrobius, specifies that whilst sacrifices were prohibited, the ornaments (perhaps meaning the statuary?) of the temples were to be conserved. What we must remember is that many of these laws were issued in response to questions and clarifications requested by provincial governors. Macrobius may well have seen statues and other ornaments being torn down and destroyed in certain Spanish cities and felt uncertain about how to act on these losses of former civic religious artwork. Macrobius' namesake and author of the *Saturnalia*, the committed pagan Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius, had on one occasion written: *vetustas quidem nobis semper si sapimus adoranda est*—perhaps they were one and the same person?²¹

If we consider the problem of the end of the temples solely from the viewpoint of the anti-pagan legislation of the 4th c. and the start of the 5th, it would suggest that many temples were destroyed due to the intransigent fanaticism of impassioned Christians, foreign administrators or monks bent on removing all traces of paganism.²² We can see

¹⁹ On temples in villas, one key example is Carranque, which some scholars have linked to Theodosius' eastern procurator Maternus Cynegius. Yet, since sources such as Zosimus and Libanius among others, record him as a fervent Christian who dedicated himself to the destruction of temples, it would be really surprising that he himself would have a temple or pagan shrine in his own villa. As I have argued elsewhere, the Maternus named in the mosaic of the *cubiculum* at Carranque has nothing to do with Maternus Cynegius; nor is there any proof that he owned this site. On the temple itself here, see now Bassani (2005), who also offers comments on other villa-temples and *lararia* in private *domus* in Hispania (my thanks to A. Chavarría for drawing my attention to this article).

²⁰ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25. For this see also Delmaire (2005) 465–67.

²¹ However, the equation of names is not secure—see Cameron (1966).

²² For the monks and their deeds, see *Lib. Or.* 30.30.8; cf. Fowden (1978), who comments also on the destructive efforts of Maternus Cynegius in the East on pp. 62–63.

a few examples of this in the eastern empire and in some other regions like Gaul, but no evidence for such violence exists for Spain.²³

THE LEGISLATION OF THE SPANISH COUNCILS

In the three Church councils which took place in *Hispania* in the course of the 4th c. (at *Elbira*, *Caesaraugusta* and Toledo I), there is almost no ecclesiastical legislation passed against pagan temples. Perhaps the Spanish bishops were much more preoccupied with the Priscillianist heresy and the behaviour of both clerics and bishops than with paganism and its manifestations. The exception to this lies in the canons for the Council of *Elbira* (A.D. 303–305) which briefly comment on this issue. Strikingly, it is this Council alone (out of 37 preserved in the Spanish canonic collection spanning the 4th to 7th centuries) that touches on paganism and its temples. The first canon of the Council relates that: ‘any adult who has received baptism who comes to a temple of the idols (*ad templum idoli*) to worship will not be able to receive communion, not even at the end of his life, because this act is a capital offence’.²⁴ This canon presupposes several things: 1. The existence of pagan temples in Spain at the time of the celebration of the Council (see below); 2. Sacrifices to pagan cults were still happening in these; and 3. Even baptised Christians continued to be drawn to these cults and sacrifices. We need to be aware that bans on sacrifice come much earlier than imperial laws demanding respect for pagan shrines, and that in this case the canon is a specific Church decision and one which in no way refers to the temples themselves in terms of closure or demolition. Rather, the Council is prohibiting sacrifices being carried out by, presumably recently converted, Christians. At the same time though it is accepting, and perhaps tolerating, the fact that pagans do celebrate such rites.

The second canon also concerns sacrifices. It says that those former pagan *flamines* who, since having been ‘baptised and reborn’, still continue to sacrifice, must be excommunicated (*nec in finem accipere communionem*). This implies that, even though these individuals became

²³ Best known in south Gaul, of course, are the missions and anti-pagan activities of Saint Martin of Tours: cf. Arce (2005) 248–49.

²⁴ The canons are collected and translated in Vives (1963).

Christian, there were many that still felt obliged to sacrifice for the good of the state. More importantly though, the emphasis is again placed on the dangers of sacrifice, with no mention being made of the actual temples or shrines where such acts would have taken place. The third canon refers to those *flamines* who, while they did not sacrifice, nonetheless encouraged, celebrated or contributed (*munus*) to the games at the theatre, amphitheatre or circus. In this case, it is stated, they can be admitted to communion but must first do penance (*placuit in fineem eis praestare communionem*).²⁵ Such priests were at times, therefore, complying with the order not to sacrifice, but still pursued traditional euergetic activities. These games and events were effectively occasions that paid homage to the emperor, but where sacrifices traditionally took place. This again, therefore, was an attempt by these former priests to comply with the demands of both Church and State.²⁶

Canon 4 insists that *flamines*, who were now Christian catechumens and who had renounced sacrifice, can be admitted for baptism. Canon 41 offers us another example of a degree of Christian toleration of paganism in Roman Spain. The canon expressly prohibited the possession of idols in private homes (*ne idola in domibus suis habeant*), which refers to the old tradition of household *lares*, divine protectors of the *domus*, to whom regular offerings were made both on entering as well as exiting the house.²⁷ Interestingly, the canon recognises that the *domini* of the house might have problems with their slaves if they completely eliminate the *lares*, since the slaves may still adhere to the old ways. That is, the *domini*, or owners, cannot sacrifice but their slaves can continue to do so.

Another canon, canon 55, which also shows some tolerance towards pagan priests, is equally silent on the matter of temples, but continues the theme of a harsh line against sacrifice. We know that in public ceremonies, priests wore wreaths or crowns as marks of distinction. Canon 55 at *Elbira* does not prohibit the wearing of these by priests, but they are asked to refrain from sacrifices or from contributing to the maintenance or ornamentation of statues.²⁸ This canon complements

²⁵ Vives (1963) mistranslates the word *munus* in Canon 3, suggesting 'offering', but it should, I believe, certainly relate to public spectacles.

²⁶ Cf. Arce (2002) on games in Late Roman Spain.

²⁷ See, for example, Dionisotti (1982) 98: '*sic aptatus adoravi deos omnes, et petivi bonum processum et eventum diei totius*'.

²⁸ '*Sacerdotes qui tantum coronas portant nec sacrificent nec de suis sumptibus aliquid ad idola praestant*'.

the third, which, as we have seen, seems to reluctantly allow ceremonies and spectacles to continue, as long as no sacrifices take place. Canon 59 explicitly condemned Christians who undertook or even attended or assisted at sacrifices (*Prohibendum ne quis christianus, ut gentiles, ad idolum Capitoli causa sacrificiandi ascendat et videat*).

The last canon, number 60, refers to the problem of the destruction of statuary, and is therefore the most interesting for us here. It stipulates that anyone who ‘through their personal zeal’ destroys idols and who is then killed on that spot by a pagan who discovers them committing this act of sacrilege, should not be regarded as a martyr (*si quis idola fregit et ibidem fuerit occisus... placuit in numerum eum non recipi martyrum*).²⁹ In other words, the idols or statues should be preserved. What is stressed in the canons issued at the Council—and also in the Theodosian Code—is that sacrifices are not to be celebrated. Yet the canon implies that fanatics did exist who, at their own risk dedicated themselves to the destruction of pagan idols. This was, however, at odds with the doctrine and law of the Church and State. The Council of *Elbira* (ca. A.D. 303–305)³⁰ shows us then that even at this early date the Spanish bishops were prepared to respect temples and pagan statues, but condemn sacrifice. This stance anticipated the much later imperial legislation on the subject.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

But what actually happened to the temples in the cities of Roman Spain? The *Chronica* of the Christian bishop Hydatius covers much of the 5th c., but makes no mention of pagan temples or paganism. It could be that this issue simply did not interest him or his readers, or, given that he was based in *Gallaecia*, one of the regions where it seems pagan customs endured longest,³¹ perhaps it was a topic that was deliberately avoided so as not to reflect badly on the region and its bishop. Elsewhere, in the *Vitas patrum emeritensium*, compiled in the 7th c., in reference to the city of Mérida in the 6th c., there is no mention of paganism either, nor of old, active or reused civic temples.

²⁹ On fanatical Christians who sought martyrdom, see the valuable Bowersock (1995) esp. 59f.

³⁰ On the date of the Council, see Kulikowski (2004) 39–43, 218–20.

³¹ See Mart. Bracar. *de corr. rust.*

Certainly in the mid-4th c. in Gaul we can draw upon the evidence of the zealous bishop Martin of Tours, who in both words and deeds, incited the destruction of the temples, encouraging his monks to bring them to ruin.³² In a similar vein we can observe the actions of Bishop Maximus of Turin at the start of the 5th c. in the towns and mountainous regions of northern Italy.³³ There is no similar figure for Spain. Perhaps the Church and the Christians in *Hispania* were indeed more tolerant?

Many *coloniae* and *municipia* in Spain erected temples to different deities as well as to deified emperors. Most centres would have had at least one temple—Cordoba in Baetica had two; *Emerita* two or three; *Hispalis*, *Italica*, *Caesaraugustum*, *Barcino*, *Tarraco*, *Carteia*, *Carthago Nova*, *Asturica Augusta*, etc. were all similarly provided for. And yet, archaeologically, none of these places have shown any evidence for churches reusing former temple space or temples being directly converted into churches in the course of the 4th to 7th centuries. The sole exception could be the temple located in the Upper Town at *Tarraco*, which overlooks the Flavian-period forum and council complex. Simon Keay believes:

...the bishop's church is most likely to have been located in the upper town, perhaps in fact located within what had been the Temple of Rome and Augustus in the uppermost terrace; given imperial legislation against paganism and pagan temples in the later fourth century, it seems unlikely that this could have continued in use as a pagan shrine.³⁴

Yet, a different interpretation of the archaeological evidence argues that one part of the upper forum of the city had become, by the mid-5th c., a rubbish dump, and that there is currently no definitive proof that the temple became a church in this century.³⁵ As Luke Lavan has noted, texts reveal that by the early 8th c. a church was established here, from which late antique ecclesiastical architectural components

³² Fowden (1978) 71–72; Fontaine (1968) 744, 760–62. For Gaul in general, see Mâle (1950).

³³ Maximus Taurin. *Serm.* 42.1, 48.4, 105, 106 (ed. Mutzenbecher 1962), with reference to landowners permitting sacrifices to occur on their properties.

³⁴ Keay (1996) 33.

³⁵ One of Augustine's letters (11) from a Consentius, contains many references to Christian buildings in the city but without offering any precise topographic indications—Divjak (1981) cf. Arce (2005) 224f with refs.

(‘Visigothic’ to some) and opus sectile have been recovered.³⁶ In any case, this is still the only potential case of a temple to church conversion in *Hispania* we know of. By the time it was converted the temple may well have no longer been regarded as a pagan structure by the inhabitants of the city.

Some historians and archaeologists have noted that intramural Christian building took place after the 4th and 5th c. in the cities of *Hispania*; before this the Church’s presence was peripheral and extramural. In this sense, Spain repeated the situation in the city of Rome in the Constantinian period.³⁷ Several excavations at temple sites in Spain have shown that the majority saw some level of reuse and suffered from partial dismantlement and robbing, as evident at *Emerita*. In a recent synthetic analysis, Alba has argued, in the case of the two main temples of the capital of *Lusitania*, that: “In the case of the fora of *Emerita*, the porticoes and temples were destroyed. We do not know if they were already in the process of being dismantled, or were in a good state, but in any case they were considered dispensable.”—a phenomenon which happened, according to Alba, in the mid-5th c.³⁸ Also, the temple in calle Holguín, the Temple of Concordia, which had had its marblework damaged, was partly colonised by houses in the Visigothic era. In the portico of the ‘*Augusteum*’, where the temple ‘of Diana’ stood, something similar occurred. Its marbles were robbed and it was occupied by Visigothic-period structures.³⁹ Whilst the sequence at the temple at *Carteia* is not as clear, the grandiose *Traianeum* at *Italica* seems not to have been a temple long, and in the Late Roman period there was a reoccupation by “closely packed housing in the porch for the poor” with materials from the temple building being reused by these new inhabitants.⁴⁰ It seems, however, that the forum at *Barcino* was maintained until the 6th c., as was the Temple of Augustus.⁴¹ Nevertheless, houses invaded the precinct of the Isis temple in *Baelo Claudia*,

³⁶ Lavan (2001) notes that the church of St. Thecla is mentioned in the *Oracional de Verona*, compiled in the early 8th c. (edn. Vives (1946)). Its establishment inside this temple is late antique: *opus sectile* fragments and ‘Visigothic’ architectural components were found: Serra Vilaró (1960) 90–91.

³⁷ Most recently, Kulikowski (2005) 64–65. On Rome and Italy in general, see Christie (2006) chapt. 2.

³⁸ Alba (2004) 214–15.

³⁹ Alba (2004) 215; Alvarez & Nogales (2003) 318–22.

⁴⁰ See León (1988) 45, 148 on *Italica*; Bendala and Lourdes Roldán (2005) 153–60 for *Carteia*.

⁴¹ Gurt & Godoy (2000) 434.

“probably in the course of the second half of the 4th c. and were occupied for about two hundred years, some time during the 5th and 6th c. A.D.”⁴² At *Baelo* in fact, already in the 3rd c., there appears to have been an almost complete abandonment of the town’s main buildings, which were then reused as houses, workshops or stores from the 4th c.⁴³ Similarly, Corduba’s calle Claudio Marcelo temple was used for housing by the 4th and 5th c.⁴⁴ At *Caesaraugusta*:

...we can claim that there was a cathedral at San Vicente at the end of the 4th c....some people suggest it was located under the current Cathedral of San Salvador. However, the excavations carried out inside the cathedral do not confirm either way whether the basilica existed there or not.⁴⁵

The use of crosses or other chrismons on temples to Christianise or neutralise them, advocated in *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25 (A.D. 435) above, can be seen on some Spanish temples, for example on one column at the temple of the calle Holguín at *Emerita* (Temple of Concordia).⁴⁶ Unfortunately, like all these examples, they cannot be reliably dated. The temptation to tie such graffiti to the law of 435 is, nonetheless, reasonable and more should be done to try and record, plot and examine such evidence. This activity merely Christianised or neutralised a temple of its pagan past, it did not turn it into a church however. Temples were, therefore, reused and abandoned in Spain from the 3rd c., but there is a distinct lack of evidence for pagan temples being turned into churches.

CONCLUSIONS

Several general points can be made about the fate of the temples in Late Roman Spain. Firstly, the evidence shows us that any conversion of temples into churches in *Hispania* was a late and rare phenomenon;

⁴² Sillières (1997) 178.

⁴³ Sillières (1997) 57.

⁴⁴ Salvador (1992) 130. The book provides wider consideration of Hispano-Roman temples, but with little attention to the late phases of use/decay.

⁴⁵ Aguarod & Mostalac (1998) 53–54.

⁴⁶ Alba (2004) 220, refers in fact to a cross on a moulding at this temple; either this is an error or it relates to a second example. The claim of another incised cross at the main entrance to the amphitheatre here, however, is, I think, erroneous.

the only possible example we have is at Tarraco, which is not certainly attested before the early 8th c. There is no indication that the pagan temples of Spain were deliberately destroyed, a contrast to the picture we get from the literary sources. Many temples in *Hispania* had already been abandoned in the 4th c. and often their spaces came to be occupied by houses or other structures such as shelters. The dismantling of a temple would have been a costly and difficult operation, but we can at least identify that, from the second half of the 5th c., materials from some of them began to be reused in other buildings. Nonetheless, many other temples remained largely intact, albeit now, perhaps, valued only for their architectural merit, having lost their religious function. The graffito of a cross on the Temple of Concordia at *Emerita* may well have been the Christian response to the law *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25 in the 430s A.D., which could have been part of a wider Christianisation process which did not require the destruction of temples in order to eradicate their pagan character. The key goal of the Spanish Church, attested clearly in the canons of the Council of *Elbira*, was the prohibition of sacrifices at these sites, a policy that was not immediately successful judging from the continual reissuing of this ban.

Therefore temples continued to dominate the urban landscape of many cities in Spain in Late Antiquity, even if they no longer had a pagan function. Of the numerous churches that were subsequently built in the towns and cities, we cannot yet state to what extent Christian architects and planners used the columns and ornaments of the pagan temples for their new structures. Much more detailed and systematic research is required to interpret properly the nature of the transition from pagan to Christian in Spain, but the image as it currently stands is an intriguing mix of continuity as well as change.

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THE TEMPLE OF FLORA OR VENUS BY THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS AND THE NEW CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHY: THE 'PAGAN REVIVAL' IN ACTION?

Michael Mulryan

Abstract

This article argues that we can perceive a continuing and persistent pagan tradition in Rome throughout the 4th c., rather than a 'revival', through the archaeological, literary and calendrical evidence. Repairs of pagan structures continue to take place in the city in the mid- to late 4th c., notably of a Temple of Flora or Venus next to the Circus Maximus. Such temples were the foci for cultic festivals that were still taking place in the 4th c., and thereby represent the continued vibrancy of pagan traditions in the centre of Rome. This area of the city was home to other notably persistent pagan festivals, and so a newly built Christian church in the area does not seem to have affected matters. Is this an indication of a conciliatory and harmonious topography that saw pagan and Christian buildings working peacefully alongside each other in the Latin West?

INTRODUCTION

The late story of paganism in Italy and the West is not an easy one to tell. The fragmentary and potentially misleading evidence and its paucity, whether written, epigraphic or archaeological, have meant a lot of assumptions have been made on this subject based on very few facts. Two of these include: the occurrence of the so-called 'pagan revival' in the late 4th c., a paradigm which has only been challenged relatively recently; and the steady material decline of the temples in spite of this apparent resurgence.¹ In this article I will confront these assumptions by examining one specific area of Rome, namely that around the Circus Maximus, and particularly a Temple of Flora or Venus, which was situated on the Circus' south side at the foot of the

¹ E.g. Bloch (1945) and (1963); cf. Cameron (1999) 114.

Aventine hill (Fig. 1). The reason for the uncertainty surrounding the identity of the temple I wish to focus on, and why we are examining it in this context, is that we know from an anonymous poem of the 4th or early 5th c., the *Carmen Contra Paganos*, that a temple in Rome dedicated to one of these goddesses was restored at that time, but it is not clear from the passage which of them it was.² I will suggest that this restoration took place next to the Circus, and coupled with other restorations and building activity in the area, as well as other evidence, implies that Rome was a city that still engaged in public pagan traditions, albeit largely secularised, well into the 5th c., and occasionally restored its pagan buildings.

The decline in temple repairs—a phenomenon that began in the 3rd, not the 4th c.—was made worse by the removal of the public funds given to temples in A.D. 382 and by the eventual banning of pagan worship altogether by Theodosius I ten years later. There is no reason to believe that, until then, pagan observance had appreciably fallen in Rome or indeed anywhere else in the West. The restoration of a Temple of Flora or Venus, probably after 382, and the active paganism of the person that is the subject of the *Carmen*, is, therefore, more a sign of the continuing health and visibility of paganism, amongst elements of the Roman elite at least, rather than a sign of a ‘revival’. The growth of Christianity and its commensurate topography at this time has led to the idea of a pagan ‘decline’, and therefore the paradigm of a ‘revival’. As we will see though, this Christian topography did not challenge the existing pagan landscape but rather worked alongside it. The city of Rome was still overtly pagan in character well into the 5th c., yet soon became the centre of Christianity in the West, which led to an unusually polarised religious atmosphere. Thus, to describe Rome as ‘conservative’ or ‘traditional’ is too simplistic, as is the idea that it is representative of Italy and the West in general.

Further, Rome was unique and unrepresentative because of the numerous and still wealthy aristocracy who resided there, or who had strong links to the city. The city’s status attracted unusually large and generous patronage. To fund games or the restoration of an important building in Rome had a great deal more cachet and prestige attached

² The uncertainties and problems surrounding this source will be discussed below, but the idea that it cannot be trusted at all is an overreaction.

to it than funding anything similar elsewhere. Put simply, the restoration and construction of buildings, or the funding of public games in Rome were not reflective of what was happening in the rest in Italy or further north, but was rather an amplification or perhaps exaggeration of it. It is only with other rich urban centres, that were important Christian bishoprics as well, that any fair comparisons can be made—places such as Alexandria or Ravenna, for example. As such, our examination of the archaeology of paganism in this central part of Rome tells us a great deal about what was happening in the city and other comparable urban centres, but the idea that it can give us an insight into paganism at this time beyond that, is suspect.

THE CIRCUS TEMPLES AND THEIR REPAIR: THE ANCIENT EVIDENCE

We turn first to the *Carmen Contra Paganos*. There is some debate as to the precise date when it was written, which impacts on its importance here, although it is certainly from the second half of the 4th c. or possibly the early 5th. The ambiguity is due to the unknown identity of the *praefectus* and consul that is the protagonist of the poem, who is described as an active and devoted pagan by the critical, presumably Christian, writer. The prefect's identity has varied from Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, the City Prefect in A.D. 367–68, and *consul designatus* when he died in 384, to Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, a Praetorian Prefect in 390–91 and 393–94, and consul in 394, or Gabinius Barbarus Pompeianus, City Prefect in 408–409.³ This poem has been used as one of the main pieces of evidence in favour of the idea of the 'pagan revival'; but, if it was written in the 380s, when temple restoration and the pagan cults were still legal, then it hardly provides evidence of a 'revival', but simply a record of the continued health of paganism at this time in Rome.⁴

³ For the arguments see Cracco Ruggini (1979); Cameron (1999) 114 (for Praetextatus) and Mommsen (1870) 350–63; Matthews (1970) 464–79; Coşkun (2004) 152–78 (for Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, *praefectus praetorio Italiae, Illyrici et Africae* in A.D. 390–91 and 393–94). Manganaro (1960) 210–24 preferred the choice of Gabinius Barbarus Pompeianus.

⁴ Cameron (1999) 114.

The relevant passage concerning the restoration of a temple occurs towards the end of the *Carmen*. Within the poem, which has many passages that refer to the city of Rome, a *Symmachus heres* is described as restoring a Temple of Flora or a Temple of Venus.⁵ The reason for the doubt is due to the word *cui* not being clearly associated with either deity. Here is the passage in full:

*Sola tamen gaudet meretrix te consule Flora,
ludorum turpis genetrix Venerisque magistra,
composuit templum nuper cui Symmachus heres.*⁶

A translation gives us:

Yet only the harlot Flora delights you Consul,
and the games of Venus, her ugly old mistress,
to which the heir of Symmachus repaired the temple not long ago.

or:

Yet only the games of the harlot Flora,
and her ugly old mistress Venus delight you Consul,
to which the heir of Symmachus repaired the temple not long ago.

Neither translation is clear cut, although Venus' temple seems the most likely recipient of the repair. The passage does, however, identify that a repair took place, and we have no good reason to doubt its veracity. In spite of the fact that our source is a polemic, the statement concerning the repair is an aside that does not refer to the target of the author's ire.

The precise identity of the temple is more open to debate. There was another temple to Flora on the Quirinal, as well as numerous other centres dedicated to Venus. However, although the Quirinal temple—associated with an ancient altar to the goddess⁷—was no doubt another focus for the *Floralia*, the description of *ludi* points to temples associated with the Circus. Furthermore, we know that the *Floralia* and its associated games, as well as the festival of Venus *Verticordia*, were still taking place in Rome in the 4th c., and that both of their respective temples lay not far from each other next to the Circus

⁵ E.g. Temple of Venus: Matthews (1970) 477. Temple of Flora: Bloch (1945) 233; Steinby (1993–2000) 2.254.

⁶ Carmen Codicis Parisini 8084 'Carmen Contra Paganos', ll. 112–14.

⁷ Martial 5.22.3–4; Varro *Ling.* 5.74, 158.

Maximus on the Aventine side.⁸ Therefore, on balance, one of these two structures is the most likely candidate for the temple mentioned. The continuation of the festivals and games associated with each suggests this restoration may have been as a consequence of the relative health of both cults at this time. There is also the possibility that the two *aedes* were part of the same *templum* or temple precinct, so the poem could even be referring to the restoration of the whole complex. Either way, the restoration of a pagan monument in the centre of Rome in the mid- to late 4th c. indicates the perseverance of at least one branch or cult of paganism, as well as its continued observation. It is thus a sign that elements of the governing classes sought to retain and embellish the pagan character of the city's landscape at that time. This very prominent restoration, coupled with the other temple repairs and continuing festivals we know about in the city, give the impression of a healthy and prominent pagan Rome well into the 4th c.

The Temple of Venus *Verticordia* or the Temple of Flora, both situated on the southern edge of the Circus Maximus, were of mid- to late Republican origin. The year of the dedication of the temple dedicated to Flora is uncertain: according to Velleius Paterculus it was 240 B.C., but Pliny claims 238 B.C. The Temple of Venus *Verticordia* was built in 114 B.C.⁹ In other words, the temples were four or five hundred years old by our period, although that of Flora had been restored under Augustus.¹⁰ Their locations can also be accurately estimated, not by physical remains but by written sources. Flora's temple almost certainly lay at the end of the *Vicus Publicus*, in other words at the south-east corner of the Circus, and that to *Venus Verticordia* is described as being situated in the Murcian Valley *ubi circenses editi sunt*.¹¹ A temple to Venus *Obsequens* also lay in the same area, perhaps closer to the Circus itself.¹² The restoration of one of these temples, or the *templum* that enclosed them both, by a *Symmachus heres* implies a private donation given by that individual towards the project, rather than by a prefect or *curator*, although they may have held public office whilst carrying out this work.¹³ This person may have been either Quintus

⁸ See below.

⁹ Flora: Vell. Pat. 1.14.8; Pliny *HN* 18.286. Venus: *Obsequens De prodigiis*, 37.

¹⁰ Dio Cass. 50.10.3; Tac. *Ann.* 2.49.

¹¹ Flora: Tac. *Ann.* 2.49.1; Steinby (1993–2000) 2.253. Venus: *Verticordia*—Livy 10.31.9; Serv. 8.636; Steinby (1993–2000) 4.119.

¹² Steinby (1993–2000) 4.118.

¹³ Ward-Perkins (1984) 87.

Fabius Memmius Symmachus, a praetor in A.D. 401, his father Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, the most well-known member of the family due to his surviving letters and *relationes* to the emperor whilst he was City Prefect in 384–85, or the younger Nicomachus Flavianus, prefect in 392/94, 399–400 and 408 and son of the potential target of the *Carmen*, and husband of the daughter of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus.¹⁴ The identification of the restorer of course depends on the date of the poem, but if any repair was privately funded then it was most likely after 382, when Gratian removed state funding for temples.¹⁵ The precise identity and status of the donor are thus impossible to gauge; it is enough for our purposes to acknowledge that this activity took place, and that it occurred in the late 4th or early 5th c.

This restoration is an indication then of a willingness by a member of the Roman pagan aristocracy to restore an old, prominently placed and frequently seen temple in spite of the threat of imperial censure. In effect, this could be seen as a deliberate attempt to advertise the fact that paganism in the city was alive and well. It could also have been a populist move as a consequence of the popularity of the *ludi Florales* or *Veneralia*, and a venture to highlight their religious origins—a feature that had been sidelined over the years. As a result, this restoration is likely to have had a powerful religious motive, one that justified a mention in a critical Christian poem, but, equally, was a project driven by an existing and continuing pagan tradition, not one that was dying and in need of revival. To see this restoration in a wider context, however, we can look at what was occurring in the contemporary topography in the immediate area.

THE SURROUNDING TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTIC ACTIVITY

The Circus Maximus was the major monument in this part of Rome, and was still the focus, alongside the Flavian amphitheatre, for the entertainments that continued to be immensely popular in the 4th c.

¹⁴ Bloch (1945) 233; Matthews (1970) 477, n.67; *PLRE* 1. Symmachus 4, Flavianus 14, *PLRE* 2. Symmachus 10.

¹⁵ A loophole, that allowed legacies to be used towards temple building and land maintenance, was closed in A.D. 384. Pronouncements of A.D. 382 and 384: Symmachus *Relat.* 3.11–13, 16. Pronouncement of A.D. 382: Amb. *Ep.* 17.3–5 and cited in *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.20 (A.D. 415).

and beyond, in spite of the Church's reservations.¹⁶ What emphasises this popularity is the embellishment of the Circus by Constantius in A.D. 357. On his visit to the city, the emperor added an Egyptian obelisk to the spina. Interestingly, the new monument was, according to Ammianus, dedicated to Sol, a god favoured by his father Constantine, the emperor who in fact initiated the project to bring the obelisk to Rome.¹⁷ This was yet another pagan ornament for the Circus, therefore, as well as being the fulfilment of his father's wishes. Nevertheless, the likely purpose behind this project was the obvious positive propaganda it would give Constantius: an emperor visiting Rome and embellishing a major popular public space. The question remains though: could the appearance of this obelisk be seen by the pagan audience at the Circus as a reiteration or remembrance of the traditional dedication of the place to Sol?¹⁸ The Circus Maximus was a showcase for many pagan shrines and statues, and thus the whole structure was a quasi-religious place;¹⁹ consequently, its embellishment in the 4th c., as well as being a sign of the continued health and popularity of games in the city, was a pagan restoration in a sense, even if Constantine or Constantius would probably not have seen it, or wished to see it, that way.

Another feature of this part of Rome is the growing Christian presence. By the mid-5th c. there were three churches in the vicinity, S. Sabina, S. Prisca and S. Anastasia. As only the latter, however, was certainly in place by the mid to late 4th c., when the building activity we have described above was taking place,²⁰ so we will focus on S. Anastasia and its impact and location. This church is situated at the foot of the south-west corner of the Palatine hill, with the Circus Maximus just to its south. From a 5th c. inscription—which was read in the church in the 9th c., but is now lost—the building is thought to date from the time of bishop Damasus (366–84) or possibly before. The inscription describes Damasus' decoration of the building and its later embellishment by bishop Hilarius (461–68). The fact that it has three presbyters in 499 also indicates the importance of the

¹⁶ Salv. *Gub. Dei* 6.36–38; Leo, *Sermo* 85.1.

¹⁷ Amm. Marc. 17.4.12–23.

¹⁸ Tert. *De spect.* 8.1; Quinn Schofield (1969) 639–49.

¹⁹ Curran (2000) 218–59; Tert. *De spect.* 7–8.

²⁰ S. Sabina: Steinby (1993–2000) 4. 221–22; S. Prisca: Steinby (1993–2000) 4. 162–63.

foundation. Archaeology points to a mid-4th c. church being built on Antonine and Severan substructures: it was built on top of, and perpendicular to, the first floor of rooms of an *insula*, perhaps some sort of shop complex. It was bounded by two Roman streets to its north and south which determined its axis. A baptistery may have been added by the prefect Longinianus in the early 5th c., although the inscription could refer to the example at St. Peter's.²¹ Building across the rooms, rather than creating a naved building within several, meant the pre-existing Roman structure must have been in ruins or was deliberately destroyed in order to use this site. This spot's centrality may have been the reason for the church's construction here, or possibly the pagan nature of the area.

This paganism was particularly apparent in the 4th c. during the time when the festivals to Venus *Verticordia* and Flora took place on the first and last days of April respectively, the *Floralia* continuing into early May.²² On the 15th February the ancient festival of the *Lupercalia* was also still celebrated.²³ This feast was very much centred on this area of Rome, involving a procession that took on the Palatine hill and the *via Sacra*. The starting-point was the *Lupercal* cave, set only a short distance in fact from S. Anastasia, the two only being separated by a steeply stepped street, the *scalae caci*.²⁴ The exact location of the shrine and the form it took are unknown; the fact that it may have simply been the embellishment of a natural cave feature, representing the place where Faustulus discovered Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf, is the likely reason for the lack of remains. Christian destruction should not be ruled out either. The most likely spot is thought to be the area of the Caecilian stairs, about 150 metres from the church.²⁵

²¹ *ICUR* 2. 150 nos. 18, 19; *ILCV* 92; Mommsen (1894) 413, 414; Whitehead (1927) 405–11; *CBQR* 1. 43–48; Snyder (1985) 80–81; Steinby (1993–2000) 1.37–38; Curran (2000) 142–44. For the theory that the church existed in A.D. 351, see Matthews (1992) 299–303.

²² See nn.30 and 31.

²³ Degrassi (1963) 240–41 and see n.25.

²⁴ The various shrines within and around the Circus were separated from the church by its outer wall and so visually and spatially they were separate. Those shrines just outside the Circus, like the Temple of Flora and *Sol et Luna*, lay on its Aventine side.

²⁵ Steinby (1993–2000) 3. 198–99. Both the *Lupercal* and the 'House of Romulus' appear in the 4th c. lists of the contents of Rome: *Notitia/Curiosum* X. (ed. Nordh (1949) 89.9, 90.7). The recent (Jan '07) discovery of a richly decorated cave vault under the *Domus Augusti* seems more likely to be a private nymphaeum than the

The festival involved the sacrifice of a goat and a dog at the *Lupercal* shrine. This was followed by a group of young men of high social class dressed only in goat skins running around the base of the Palatine, or between the *Lupercal* and the *via Sacra*, or perhaps all over the Palatine with no specific route, whipping people with branches or goat skin thongs. Another route may have consisted of only a part of the Palatine and a procession up and down the *via Sacra*, but, interestingly, none of these routes could have avoided the church of S. Anastasia. Late Republican and early imperial sources are unclear as to the festival's religious meaning and significance: was it a fertility or purification rite?²⁶ Certainly by Pope Gelasius' time, in the late 5th c. A.D., such obscurity can only have been amplified. The Pope's letter, the *Contra Lupercalia*, written in A.D. 494, shows both the particular persistence of this festival and its long-standing popularity. This clearly exercised the Christian authorities in the city.²⁷ As a result, we know that this shrine and the *Lupercalia* were still active at least a hundred years after the foundation of S. Anastasia. This long period of coexistence suggests that the pagan and Christian elements of the city need not have been opposing each other, but at times lived alongside each other in peaceful, if perhaps occasionally uncomfortable, harmony. If this was the case in a city as religiously polarised as Rome, then this more harmonious topography could have been repeated elsewhere as well. In any case, on the 15th February, there would have been some friction, or at least interaction, between S. Anastasia and the *Lupercalia*; however, any friction may only have been felt amongst the Christian authorities, as Gelasius' letter implies popular Christian participation.

As such, many of the Christian, as well as, by this period, many of the pagan participants may well have viewed the festival as an

Lupercal cave; with decoration similar to the Golden House of Nero, it may have been part of the *Domus Transitorium*, which lay in this area of the Palatine (A. La Regina, in *La Stampa*, 22nd November 2007). The ancient sources suggest the *Lupercal* lies further west, towards the south-west corner of the hill.

²⁶ Modern scholars still find the *Lupercalia* a puzzle. Some believe the rite to be magical, religious, associated with kingship or the foundation of the city, connected to the dead, fertility or to the early agricultural life of Rome: Varro *Ling.* 6.13.34; Plut. *Rom.* 21.3–8, *Caes.* 61.3–4; August. *De civ. D.* 18.12; Scullard (1981) 76–78 and refs; Harmon (1878) 1441–46; Wiseman (1995) 82, 85–88.

²⁷ *Lettre contre les Lupercales et dix-huit messes du Sacramentaire léonien*, (ed. & transl. Pomarès (1959) 162–89). For the idea that the letter was in fact written by Felix III, Gelasius predecessor, see Duval (1977) 246–50; Günther (1895) 101; festival recorded in a calendar of A.D. 448–49: Degraffi (1963) 265.

archaic rite that signified Roman identity and history more than a religious ceremony.²⁸ Nonetheless, there was certainly a spatial association between the festival and the church on the 15th February and with the shrine on the other days of the year simply because of the short distance between the two. This was the most central church in Rome until the 6th c., so its mere presence is symbolic. Its association, whether planned or not, with one of, if not the most persistent pagan festival and its shrine seems more than a coincidence. Perhaps the existence of an important church here made the festival and its shrine acceptable and contributed to its longevity? Was Damasus or a predecessor trying to counter the festival and the *Lupercal's* influence and power, which backfired, or perhaps trying to use that power for the Church's own ends? Was this perhaps to link Christianity with one of the foundation myths of the city, in the same way as various bishops, especially Damasus, had tried to do with Peter and Paul as the new founders of a Christian Rome? It is interesting to note that from the 8th c. at least, but probably from the 6th, S. Anastasia was the starting-point for a procession on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.²⁹ This falls in February or early March; was this to rival or replace the still continuing (or now long-gone?) *Lupercalia* festivities which took place around the same time of year?

With the other festivals associated with the area, the *Veneralia* and *Floralia*, we can be more precise as to their early meaning and content. Both appear as enduring as the *Lupercalia*, and so the restoration of one or both of the temples that were the focus for their celebrations should not perhaps surprise us. The *Veneralia* took place on the 1st April and is thought to be ancient in origin, but the festival first appears on the Philocolean Calendar dated to A.D. 354; the ceremonies on the day involved exclusively women, but there appears to have been two different events, one for women of high rank that focused on Venus *Verticordia*, and another for all other women, which seems to have included prostitutes, and was a day that involved the worship of *Fortuna Virilis*. The former regarded the day as a time for purification that gave the devotee some ability to charm or 'change the heart' of their beloved—thus *Verticordia*. Most female participants,

²⁸ The original route may have been associated with the foundation of the city: Rykwert (1976) 93–96.

²⁹ Baldovin (1987) 134–35, 160.

however, went to the men's baths on this day wearing myrtle wreaths and offered incense to *Fortuna Virilis* there, so that any bodily marks or blemishes would be hidden from men. The statue to the goddess was also washed. The ceremony associated with Venus *Verticordia* and her temple clearly had a moral tone, whereas the day had a more physical or sexual agenda with the ritual that honoured *Fortuna Virilis*. It is unclear whether these two festivals were originally regarded separately and only later became associated together and whether they retained their original traditions by Late Antiquity. Whatever the case, the day as a whole seems to have still been actively celebrated in the mid-4th c., at least a part of it focused on a newly restored temple.³⁰

If, however, it was the Temple of Flora that was restored, then a similarly active festival took place in and around it as well at this time. The *Floralia* consisted of the religious rituals associated with the worship of Flora, and the games that were held in her honour, the *ludi Florales*, which became increasingly licentious. They, and the festival as a whole, ran from the 28th April to the 3rd May. It was essentially a spring festival concerned with growth and fertility, with the goddess being identified with flowers and vegetation in general; presumably sacrifices and libations characterised the religious aspect of the celebration, but they also included the *Florifertum*, which comprised the carrying of ears of wheat to the goddess' sanctuary as an offering. The games were clearly the most important part of the festival by the late Republic, as they became an annual event and were extended to six days by this period. Outrageous theatrical performances, usually involving nudity, became de rigueur, and the games were soon noted for their indecency rather than their religiosity; prostitutes apparently claimed the games as theirs because of this.³¹ Consequently, the *Floralia* can be said to have marginalised much of its religious elements a long time before the 4th c., and was by that time a largely secularised

³⁰ Praenestine Calendar (1st c. B.C./A.D.): Degrassi (1963) 126–27 (which only mentions *Fortuna Virilis*). Philocolean Calendar (A.D. 354): Degrassi (1963) 244–45; Ov. *Fast.*, 4.133ff; Macrobian *Sat.* 1.12.15; Lydus *Mens.* 4.65; Harmon (1978) 1466; Scullard (1981) 96–97.

³¹ Dates: Degrassi (1963) 244–47; *Florifertum*: Festus 81L (Lindsay ed. (1965)). Growth of festival: Scullard (1981) 110–11. Decadence of festival: Ov. *Fast.* 5.183–90, Juv. 6.249f, Val. Max. 2.10.8, Gell. *NA* 10.1, Auson. *Eclogae*, 23.25, Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.20; August. *De civ. D.* 2.27; cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.36.

event. Like the *Lupercalia*, the *Floralia* continued to be celebrated into the mid-5th c. A.D.³²

A point worth considering is: could the association of games with the Temple of Flora have encouraged its restoration? Constantius II and Constans demanded in A.D. 342/46 that those temples outside the walls of Rome linked to games were to be repaired.³³ Was there a law, now lost, that encouraged the restoration of similar intramural temples? Or was Flora, in fact, the patron deity of Rome, and, as such, inviting a late repair on those grounds?³⁴ Also, we should ask whether the proximity and association of an important Christian church may have contributed to the longevity of a festival with pagan origins. The fact that two of the three most enduring of these festivals took place in this area, the other being the *Saturnalia*, might be more than coincidence.³⁵ Did the presence of the church give these celebrations an element of respectability in an increasingly Christian city? Conversely, was the construction of S. Anastasia an opportunistic attempt to attach a Christian element to the spring festivals of Venus and Flora, themselves all about rebirth, renewal and purification? S. Anastasia could, after all, be a reference to the Greek *anastasis* meaning ‘rising up’, used by Christians to refer to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Could this be a deliberate ploy by the sponsor of the church to create a Christian centre that challenged or assimilated itself with a well-known pagan tradition, in order to replace it eventually with a Christian belief that had the same meaning? The critical comments of Gelasius in the late 5th c. suggest the ploy had not worked, with the festival retaining its pagan flavour, albeit now rather subtly. Equally, however, the building of this church could have been an aggressive move to challenge the pagan centre of the city, the circus games, as well as the popular *Lupercalia* itself.

The picture all this creates is one of secularisation and possible Christianisation of pagan ceremony in Rome, and where this succeeded, a continuation of these ceremonies into the 5th c. This led to the temples in the city coming to be regarded as attractive objects

³² In the Philocolean Calendar (A.D. 354): Degraffi (1963) 244–45; the *Floria* appears in the calendar of Polemius Silvius (A.D. 448–49): Degraffi (1963) 266–67.

³³ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3.

³⁴ Malalas (13.7–8 (ed. Dindorf)) says that the Tyche of Constantinople was Anthousa (Flora), and Dagron (1974) 44 argues that Constantinople had the same protectress as Rome.

³⁵ This festival’s original focus was the Temple of Saturn in the *Forum Romanum*, not far away. The *Saturnalia* soon became an equally secular celebration, of course, which contributed greatly to its survival.

d'arts rather than as places for sacrifice and pagan worship. This may explain the lack of violent destruction of such buildings in Rome. The disappearance of the temples in Rome was due more to their gradual use for *spolia*—perhaps as a consequence of the conviction that these buildings were harmless but beautiful structures, and thus ideally suited as quarries for new buildings. Nevertheless, the restoration of a prominent central pagan temple in the 4th c. by one of the Symmachi cannot have been motivated by anything other than religious scruples. Yet, this project is notable because of its rarity, and should be seen as exceptional rather than reflecting a wider trend. The lack of public funds available for temple maintenance meant the enormous costs involved were now placed upon rich individuals or groups among the pagan elite and it was the unsustainability of this burden that meant temples fell into disrepair rather than a decline in pagan observance. In this way, the lack of temple restoration and building in the 4th c. should be seen simply as a reflection of imperial legislation, which diminished and then totally cut off state funding for temple maintenance. As such, these, albeit rare, temple restorations in Rome are a sign of a still continuing and persistent pagan tradition in the city, rather than an upturn in fortunes. A similar lack of new building and repair the century before is not seen as a decline in cultic activity, so we should not fall into the trap of thinking the same situation a century later means anything different. It is the growth of Christianity in the 4th c. that has led to the paradigm of a pagan decline and therefore a 'revival' at the end of the century. For the many reasons given above, we can say there is no basis for thinking this. Rome should not be seen as reflecting a wider pattern of behaviour, but, even so, that behaviour was nothing different to what had been occurring the century previously. There was no pagan 'revival' in Rome, simply the continuation of pagan traditions that had become increasingly secularised and became more and more Christianised, and thus worked peacefully alongside the growth of Christianity, and only gradually died out into the 5th c. and beyond.

It is tempting to ask why largely secular ceremonies should be of any significance in relation to a Christian building in the first place. However, it was enough, as far as the ecclesiastical authorities were concerned, that these ceremonies originated from pagan roots and contained elements that could be traced back to them. Also, it is by no means certain, in the 4th c. at least, that the religious elements had disappeared altogether; rather, they were merely marginalised and of less importance for the participants. For the Church, it was what these traditions, ceremonies and processions *represented* that disturbed

them. This is abundantly clear from Gelasius and his comments on the *Lupercalia*.

The Temple of Flora, or Venus *Verticordia*, and S. Anastasia, both situated either side of the Circus Maximus, can be seen as symbolic of Rome as a whole in Late Antiquity: an old pagan temple, restored by a member of a pagan aristocratic family, opposite a new Christian church built by an ambitious and proselytising bishop; in between was the Circus Maximus, still a popular place of entertainment and itself embellished with an obelisk dedicated to the sun god Sol by the Christian emperor Constantius in A.D. 357. This implies a Rome with a continuing, albeit fading, pagan tradition, with the new imperially endorsed religion of Christianity imposing itself close by, with the ever popular entertainments separating them. It was these three arenas that were the key areas of competition in Late Antiquity, all vying for greater prominence and popularity in the city. The extent to which this was the case in the West, outside Rome, is difficult to say due to a lack of evidence and, as we have said, the uniqueness of Rome. Only at Rome can we be confident that patronage for the staging of games and the restoration of pagan monuments continued well into the 5th c.; elsewhere in Italy the impact of Christianity was greater in the centre of cities, for example at Milan and Ravenna, but only in Rome can we say with any assurance that pagan monuments were, even occasionally, embellished themselves.

THE FATE OF PAGAN BUILDINGS ELSEWHERE IN ROME AND ITALY

Other pagan building work and restoration in 4th and 5th c. Rome was infrequent, but we have more known cases here than in the rest of Italy put together. This may be a comment on the healthy survival of inscriptions in the city more than anything else, but it is certainly a product of the wealthy pagan aristocracy that continued to live in and/or patronise Rome. We know of eight other projects in total, two of which, however, are not certain, and all but one were restorations of already existing structures.³⁶ The recorded restoration of pagan monu-

³⁶ Restorations: Temple of Jupiter *Heliopolitanus*: Platner and Ashby (1929) 295; Steinby (1993–2000) 3.138–42. A Temple of Apollo (Sosianus?): *CIL* 6. 45; *Portico Deorum Consentium*: *CIL* 6.102. Portico of the Temple of *Bonus Eventus*: Amm. Marc. 29.6.19. Temple of Saturn in the forum (3rd or 4th c.): *CIL* 6. 937. *Atrium Minervae*?

ments in Italy and the West from the 3rd c. is much rarer: there are only four recorded cases from the Italian peninsula that I am aware of from the 4th c., two of which are from just outside Rome at Ostia and Portus; the other two, one a new construction, were at Hispellum and Histonium in central Italy.³⁷ This scarcity, as we have said, should not lead us to the conclusion that there was a decline in pagan observance nor to argue that temple repairs did not occur more widely; epigraphic records that may have described such repairs are far more likely to be lost in places where spoliation and abandonment were more acute than in Rome. Having said that, the picture remains one where temple restorations were clearly unusual. Even so, such attested projects, however few and far between, combined with the evidence for the perseverance of the many pagan festivals in Rome, surely signals a continued healthy pagan tradition that still flourished, rather than one in decline. Religious activities could still take place around a temple in poor repair, and could do so openly until 391 when Theodosius I banned all pagan worship and made it illegal to even enter a temple precinct.³⁸ Yet even after this time, the festivals and traditions that surrounded the temples could and did continue in Rome, and probably elsewhere as well, although without the same civic support as at Rome they may have died out sooner. It is also unclear as to how far Theodosius' pronouncements were enforced in reality. Pagan worship no doubt continued well into the 5th c. and beyond in the West and died a natural death instead.

CONCLUSIONS

The late 4th or early 5th c. restoration of a temple in Rome, most likely next to the Circus Maximus, is less part of a larger pagan 'revival'

or *Libertatis*?: *CIL* 6.1718 with *CIL* 6.526 and 1664, *CIL* 6.1794, with Cassiod., *Var.* 1.4.1 and 4.4.5. Temple of Concord (uncertain date, but late): *CIL* 6.89. New building: mithraeum: *CIL* 6. 754.

³⁷ Restorations: Temple of Hercules?: *AE* (1948) 127; Bloch (1963) figs. 4 and 5 (cf. Boim (2010) (Ostia). Temple of Isis: *AE* (1968) 86 (Portus). Capitolium: *CIL* 9.2842 (Histonium = Vasto, Abruzzo). New building: Temple of the *gens Flavia* (the family of Constantine): *CIL* 11.5265 (Hispellum = Spello, Umbria).

³⁸ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10–11. Pagan altars in use in Rome in the A.D. 380s: Ambrose, *Ep.* 18.31. Indeed, some cult activity could still have continued beyond 391, but this was unlikely to have been in public—cf. MacMullen (1997) 24.

and more a sign of a possible assimilation with, or at least an uneasy relationship between, ancient pagan traditions and Christianity. Those traditions that survived were those that were secularised and popular enough to endure in spite of the new religious atmosphere. Aside from this, Rome cannot be said to be representative of the West as a whole, or even of Italy. The paucity of evidence for pagan restorations, and the much better evidence for church-building we see elsewhere, in fact suggests that in the Latin West there was a neglect of pagan places in favour of the growth and appearance of Christian ones. But this does not mean the temples and shrines were destroyed or unused; in fact, what Rome can tell us is that church and temple could live alongside each other peacefully. The temple may have increasingly been seen as an important work of art and a beautiful, historically valuable, building in this part of the empire, as opposed to the dangerous, devil-laden places that they were sometimes regarded as in the East.

The archaeology of paganism in Italy and the West, with our lack of written evidence, can only tell us so much about the fate of the belief in the old gods. It cannot enlighten us as to the minds of men and women, but what it does tell us is that where there was a will, and the financial backing, pagan temples and shrines continued to be restored, albeit not on a grand scale. Where there was not—the reality in most urban centres outside Rome—the temples slowly decayed, but were not violently destroyed it seems, as in some parts of the East. What our temple and its surroundings in Rome in Late Antiquity can tell us is that Christianity and its churches did not obliterate the pagan-ness of the cities overnight, but rather the ancient festivals and rites simply worked around them.

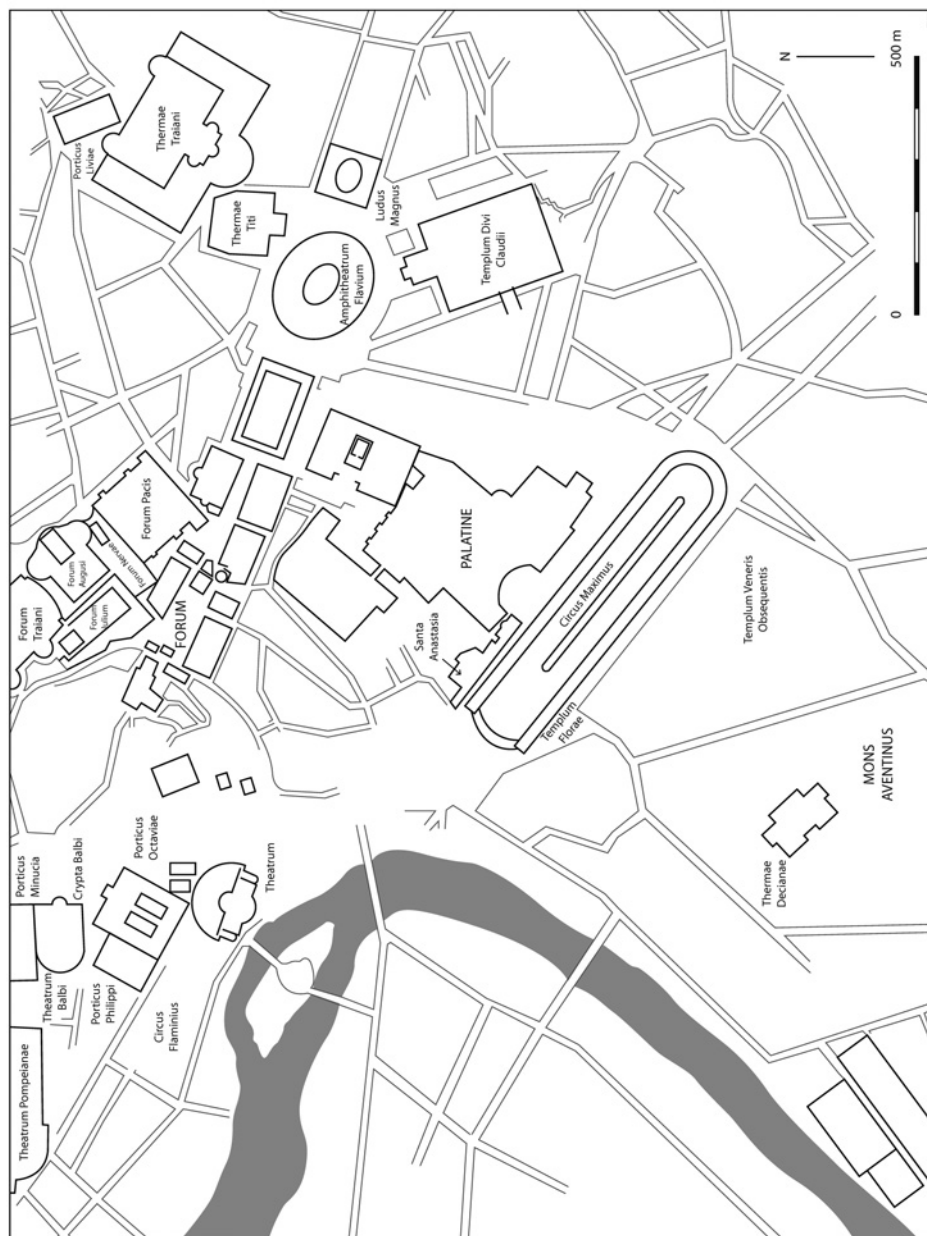


Fig. 1. Central Rome in the mid 4th c. A.D. (main structures) (digitised by Rebecca Newson).

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ICUR* = De Rossi G. B. (1925) ed. *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae*, new series vol. 2 (Rome 1925).
ILCV = Diehl E. (1924–25) *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, vol. 1 (Berlin 1924–25).
CBCR = Krautheimer R., Corbett S., Frankl W., Frazer A. (1937–77) *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, 5 vols (Vatican City 1937–77).
PLRE = Jones A. H. M., Martindale J. R., Morris J. (1971) *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols. (Cambridge 1971).

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LIST OF FIGURE

Fig. 1. Central Rome in the mid 4th c. A.D. (main structures) (digitised by Rebecca Newson).

THE FATE OF THE TEMPLES IN NORTH AFRICA

Gareth Sears

Abstract

This paper examines the changes to temples during Late Antiquity in North Africa, using archaeological evidence, supported by epigraphic and literary material where relevant. It examines the problems of the archaeology and in particular the dating for the transformation of pagan religious sites to Christian use. The paper considers the evidence for the maintenance of the pagan heritage into the mid-4th c., and the attempts to protect the temples in the guise of aesthetic preservation and antiquarianism. It proposes that it is only with the Byzantine conquest in the 6th c. that widespread destruction of temples took place, for the incorporation of their masonry into fortifications, or for the conversion of their remains into Christian churches.

INTRODUCTION

The gradual Christianisation of the empire, following Constantine's conversion, led to the problem, for the authorities of the cities in particular, of what to do with the temple buildings. This problem became gradually more acute during the course of the 4th and 5th c. and especially following the laws of Theodosius I that definitively closed the temples for pagan worship.¹ The archaeological, epigraphic and literary material of the 4th and 5th c. in Latin North Africa and Libya Superior (Cyrenaica) demonstrate that this problem was resolved in different ways at different periods. Temples were maintained, destroyed, abandoned and transformed during Late Antiquity. This article will examine the evidence, and in particular the dating evidence, for these processes. It will concentrate on the region's urban temple complexes,

¹ Unfortunately I was unable to consult Anna Leone's *Changing Townscapes in North Africa from Late Antiquity to the Arab conquest* (Bari 2007) before this paper was written.

largely because the preponderance of the evidence comes from the cities.² Some suburban sites will also be referred to where relevant.

Africa contains some of the best-preserved sites in the Roman world and, of course, dozens of temples. Despite this, there are considerable difficulties in examining the fate of these structures in Late Antiquity: large numbers of excavations conducted during the last century and a half have left us poorly placed to reconstruct in detail the end of individual temples and, by extension, trends across the region; the 'clearance' type of excavation conducted at many sites across North Africa in the late 19th and early 20th c. were largely aimed at revealing and reconstructing impressive monuments to demonstrate their apogee, and in this they were largely successful. Yet in doing so, of course, many occupation layers, in particular many late antique layers, have been lost. As a consequence of this lack of hard dating evidence many specialists rely on more problematic stylistic considerations to date changes to sacred buildings, especially when the conversion of temples to churches is addressed. This is problematic due to the lack of absolute dating criteria and because of a frequent tendency not to date mosaics (which are often used for this purpose) to specific periods because of preconceptions about the economic and social problems of these eras; as Février noted, this particularly affected the mid-3rd c. and the Vandal period.³

Despite the general problems with the archaeology, other material can be employed to create a potentially clearer picture. Latin Africa is relatively rich in epigraphic material in the 4th c. compared to other provinces, including Cyrenaica, but we are still faced with a reduction in numbers of inscriptions compared to earlier centuries. This quantitative decline in commemorations of pagan sacred building in the course of the 4th c. may accurately reflect a reduction in work, but it could also indicate reticence on the part of the elite to connect themselves too closely to pagan cults when imperial religious policy was anti-pagan. Nonetheless, a series of inscriptions from Africa demonstrates some episodes of temple repair and reconstruction in the late 3rd and first half of the 4th c.

² There is occasional evidence of activity at rural temples in Africa but they are few and far between: see, for example, August. *Ep.* 46.

³ Février (1982) 829.

Literary sources can also be used to supplement the archaeological record. The writings of Augustine, Quodvultdeus and others provide general information about changes in sacred space in the later Roman period. However, except in rare cases, they are often strong on rhetoric and infuriatingly light on detail. Additionally, of course, employing literary material to interpret the archaeological record is theoretically problematic in itself; the reality the writer describes may not actually match that produced through excavation. That is to say, a narrative of the history of religion in Late Antiquity based solely on the ecclesiastical historians might produce a model of inexorable Christianisation and the rapid decline of the temples, but the archaeology does not show this.⁴ However, literary works do provide us with a useful context in which to place the archaeological evidence.

CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

The Early Empire had seen a steady expansion in the numbers of temples built in the cities of Africa. The apogee of temple construction occurred from the reign of Trajan through to the Severan period; thereafter documented building work declined rapidly. At the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th c. the epigraphic evidence suggests that although temples were still being repaired, virtually none were built: in fact, only two temples are documented as being built in this period: the Temple of the Divine Carus at Verecunda in A.D. 283–84 and another, perhaps, under the tetrarchs at Thignica. However, this latter building, which Lepelley labels ‘The Temple to the Genius of the Tetrarchs’, may have not been a temple.⁵ As such, the evidence does not point to widespread temple construction across North Africa beyond the tetrarchic period.

In contrast, repair work was still taking place in these years. The evidence highlighted in Tables 1–3 appears to indicate a renaissance in the maintenance of pagan places of worship under the Tetrarchy. Indeed, more temples were restored (or built) during the twenty years of the First Tetrarchy than during the previous forty years. Of course

⁴ Caseau (2004) 111–18.

⁵ Verecunda: *CIL* 8, 4221. Thignica: built between A.D. 302 and 305: *CIL* 8, 14910 and *ILTun* 8, 1308.

this peak in (largely) repair work is not a phenomenon limited to sacred building, but reflects broader trends in the commemoration of acts of civic generosity in the 4th c. Not only do more inscriptions come from the tetrarchic period, but it is also an era that produced more inscriptions per year than at any other time in the Late Roman period. In absolute terms, this was something of a revival in temple repair, but as a percentage of total *building*-work it demonstrates a decrease from the rest of the post-Severan age. Nevertheless, the absolute growth in documented temple reconstruction and other building work seems to indicate that the proportionate decrease is more to do with the sudden rejuvenation of non-temple construction in the tetrarchic era than any lack of interest in the construction of new cultic centres. What cannot be disputed is that almost half of the securely dated building work on temples, altars and votive statuary in Latin Africa, during the later Roman period, is tetrarchic. The importance of temple renovation and adornment to the elites of this period in Africa is clear: almost a quarter of all documented building under Diocletian and his colleagues was undertaken on temples. It could be argued that this simply demonstrates a trend in the epigraphic tradition; but while a renewal of traditional methods of self-promotion might fit well with the tetrarchs' ideology of being restorers of the Roman world, there seems to be little reason to believe that the peak in the inscriptions was not also accompanied with proportionately more actual building than at any other time during the Late Empire.

Table 1 Latin North African temple constructions and reconstructions.
(based on Lepelley 1981 and Jouffroy 1986)

Dates (A.D.)	Number of inscriptions
235–244	7
244–253	2
253–270	5
270–285	2
284–305	14
305–313	0
313–337	1
337–363	4
363–379	6
379–395	1
‘Fourth century’	5

Table 2 Latin North African public building constructions and reconstructions. (based on Lepelley 1981 and Jouffroy 1986)

Dates (A.D.)	Number of inscriptions
235–244	15
244–253	7
253–270	8
270–285	7
284–305	62
305–313	7
313–337	25
337–363	26
363–379	61
379–395	29

Table 3 Percentage of Latin North African temple construction and reconstruction inscriptions that relate to temples. (based on Lepelley 1981 and Jouffroy 1986)

Dates (A.D.)	Percentage
235–244	46.7%
244–253	28.6%
253–270	62.5%
270–285	28.6%
284–305	22.6%
305–313	0%
313–337	4%
337–363	15.3%
363–379	9.8%
379–395	3.4%

Even if this marks the apogee of Late Roman temple repair, low levels of documented reconstruction continued well into the mid-4th c. Only with Valentinian I's death do temples cease to be recorded as being repaired. However, it is clear that following the accession of Constantine, commemorated temple reconstructions decline in absolute numbers. This picture is complicated by a general reduction in the number of inscriptions commemorating public works under the Constantinian dynasty, compared to preceding years, but work on temples also reduced in proportion to the total numbers of inscriptions recording work on buildings.

The effect of 4th c. laws against sacrifice could also be debated. Judging from the epigraphic evidence, Constantine's law of A.D. 331 confiscating temple goods and Constantius' law of 341 which closed the temples and banned sacrifices, are likely to have impacted upon temple reconstruction, or at least commemorated reconstruction, while the redirection of municipal funds to the imperial treasury under Constantine will have had a wider impact.⁶ It is important to ask whether such laws could be consistently enforced across the empire when local civic bodies and, for that matter, local imperial administration were still dominated by a pagan elite.⁷ The evidence for some work on temples in this period and the writings of Augustine at the end of the century might suggest not, but, equally, in the fifty years of the Constantinian dynasty, only a third of the documented work carried out in the twenty years of the First Tetrarchy, was undertaken. It could be argued that undocumented work might have continued and that the limited documented examples were the tip of an illicit iceberg. But such an argument from silence is difficult to prove or refute, as the current state of the archaeological evidence does not readily allow us to get to grips with the question, but it seems more likely that major works on temples were occurring far less frequently in the reign of Constantine and his successors than under the Tetrarchy. In any case, very few cities wished to advertise any reconstruction of the traditional urban sacred topography in this period, and Constantinian religious and economic policy must have played a part in this.

Against this background, Julian's pagan revival may have had concrete results. The anti-pagan laws of the Constantinian dynasty were repealed in Julian's reign, and his restoration of municipal funds to the *curiae* of the empire must have had a profound effects on their ability to repair and beautify their cities. Julian's importance to North Africa's pagans can be seen in inscriptions at Casae and Thibilis where he is described, respectively, as: 'the restorer of liberty and of the Roman religion' and 'the restorer of the sacred rites'.⁸ Despite this, no inscriptions actually commemorate temple reconstruction during Julian's reign, which may have been too short to allow the return of funds

⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.2.3. For civic land restored by Julian see *Cod. Theod.* 10.3.1; *Cod. Iust.* 11.70.1; *Amm. Marc.* 25.4.15; *Lib., Or.*, 13.45.

⁷ See Conti (2006) 883–92 on pagan imperial officials in Africa from Constantine to Theodosius I.

⁸ *CIL* 8.4326; *ILAlg.* 2. 2. 4764.

and liberty in religious matters to result in completed buildings before his death. Julian's legacy might instead be found in the reigns of his immediate successors, as several temples were built or reconstructed and documented building work as a whole increased significantly from the preceding period.

Thus, the reigns of Valentinian I and Valens demonstrate an increase in work on temples both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total amount of recorded building work during their reigns (just under 10% of all inscriptions between A.D. 363 and 379 are of temple restorations or related work), despite the revocation of Julian's law returning funding to the temples in 364.⁹ This absolute increase in pagan building activity during the reigns of Valentinian I and Valens need not necessarily indicate a general readiness on the part of the North African elite to recommence temple construction. This material could be interpreted in different ways. It could be argued that as several of these inscriptions record work on the porticoes of temples, rather than their *cellae*, so these works had more to do with aesthetics and the preservation of a city's beauty than religious sentiment. Porticoes, although they were often the external face of the temple, were still part of a temple sanctuary, enclosing a sacred area that contained not only the cult statue and its building but also dedicatory stele and altars. The preservation of the exterior of a sacred precinct may have been related to the image of the town, but its religious character should not be ignored.

In some ways Tables 1–3 are misleading. The date range A.D. 363–79 disguises the fact that all of the inscriptions from the accession of Valentinian I until that of Theodosius I actually date from between 364 and 367. Furthermore, all but one of these inscriptions bear the name of Publilius Caeionius Caecina Albinus, the governor of Numidia and a pagan priest.¹⁰ Between 364 and 367 two temples were restored at Cirta, two more at Lambaesis and one at Thamugadi.¹¹ A series of factors—Albinus' personal influence, possibly coupled with

⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 5.13.3 and 10.1.8 documents Julian's return of money to the temples and Valens and Valentinian's revocation of that law on 23rd December 364. Valens subsequently returned a third of the city rents in 374: *Cod. Theod.* 4.13.7 (374), 15.1.18 (374).

¹⁰ Albinus was known as an ardent pagan, cf. Jer. *Ep.* 107.1 and Macrobi., *Sat.* 1.2.15.

¹¹ *ILAlg.* 2. 618, 541; *CIL* 8. 2656, 2735 (= *CIL* 8 supplement ii. 18229), 2388 = *ILS* 5554.

renewed pagan confidence and Valentinian's lack of interest in religious persecution—demonstrates the arbitrary way in which the traditional religious landscape was, or appears to have been, maintained.¹² This also demonstrates the dangers of using small numbers of inscriptions: most of these figures cannot be analysed statistically, and at best may suggest trends.

Indeed, the second half of the reign of Valentinian I and Valens, and all later reigns, demonstrate an almost total absence of documented work on the temples of the region.¹³ In many respects the precipitous decline in recorded temple construction is unsurprising given that the western emperors, Gratian and Valentinian II, had deep Christian convictions and had taken steps to disassociate themselves from the pagan religious heritage; removing the statue of Victory from the Senate House in Rome and refusing the title of *pontifex maximus*, for example. In such a climate, with sacrifice banned, few individuals would have risked announcing their generosity towards a temple on an inscription. By the time Theodosius' laws closed the temples no documented work was taking place anyway.¹⁴

This does not mean that no such work took place of course. Archaeological evidence at Cyrene and Ghirza shows us this. Building 32 at Ghirza may mark the establishment of a temple during the 4th c. and its possible enlargement in the late 4th/early 5th c., although the presence of some 2nd c. material complicates the dating of the temple's construction.¹⁵ In any case, a pagan cult seems to have been operating and flourishing here throughout the 4th c.¹⁶ At Cyrene, repairs to statues in the Sanctuary of Isis and Serapis on the Acropolis appear to have been carried out after the devastating earthquake of 365 (although repair of statuary is notoriously difficult to date), whilst a small cultic deposit from the area, with coins of the mid-4th c., demonstrate continued ritual practice.¹⁷ Elsewhere in the city, spolia

¹² Amm. Marc. 30.9.5.

¹³ The sole example of temple reconstruction (the portico) from their reigns comes from Henchir Morabba in Proconsularis (*CIL* 8.23968 and 23969). It dates from A.D. 383–88. There is also an altar dedicated to Mithras which dates to after 373: Slim (1988) 187.

¹⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.2, 4.10–11.

¹⁵ Brogan and Smith (1984) 85–87.

¹⁶ Pottery and lamps are primarily late 4th to early 6th c. in period 1: Brogan and Smith (1984) 85–92.

¹⁷ Statuary dating: Ensoli Vittozzi (1992) 241. Cultic deposit: Wild (1984) 1770–72.

was used to build the shrine of Apollo the Cithara Player and the small Temple of Zeus Ombrios was constructed after the earthquake.¹⁸ Pagan cult buildings may have been badly damaged but this did not end pagan worship in Cyrene. This may, given the almost total lack of building inscriptions in Cyrenaica, be a reflection of local disinterest in the epigraphic tradition in Late Antiquity, but it could also mark a difference between paying for the upkeep of a pagan cult and expressly advertising that you were doing so; the investigation of unexcavated temple sites across Africa would help to make it clear just how much undocumented work was occurring in the mid- to late 4th c. The temple at Ghirza, on the other hand, may demonstrate what could happen far from close imperial control. A frontier population may have been less tractable and less interesting to bishops and Christian officials than urban communities, creating a quite different pattern in temple construction, abandonment and destruction.¹⁹

ABANDONMENT AND NATURAL DISASTERS

It is important to note that the maintenance and reconstruction of sacred locales in the course of the late 3rd and 4th c. does not preclude changes to other temples at exactly the same time. Some temples demonstrate abandonment in the course of the 3rd c., long before the triumph of Christianity. This should not be a surprise nor be thought of as indicative of a 'decline' in traditional religion. Pagan religious practice had always been fluid. Pliny's letters to the Emperor Trajan demonstrate that the sanctity of temples did not prevent them being moved or altered in order to improve or develop the city's urban infrastructure.²⁰

There is plenty of archaeological evidence from across Africa that demonstrates this point. The oft-quoted decline in stele dedications to the ancestral god Saturn throughout the African provinces, and the early abandonment of some temples, are clear examples of this.²¹ Related to this might be the abandonment and subsequent reuse of the site of the open-air sanctuary to the east of Sabratha. There the sacred

¹⁸ Ensoli Vittozzi (1992) 241.

¹⁹ For the paganism of the Libyan tribes in the Byzantine era, see below.

²⁰ Plin. *Ep.* 10.94.10.

²¹ Leglay (1966) 487–88, 494–96; Frend (1952) 83–84.

site was abandoned before it had a necropolis constructed over it during the course of the 3rd c.²² This cannot be interpreted as a decline in interest in traditional religion in Sabratha *per se*, since, following the abandonment of the eastern sanctuary, other religious structures in the area were repaired in the course of the 4th c. (see below), but it does demonstrate that individual cults, or at least cult locations, could lose their importance without Christianity being a factor. A classic, although extreme, example of this can be seen at the Roman fort of Bu Njem where most of the temples appear to have been ignored and left to decay by the native population following the departure of the legionary cohort in A.D. 259/63.²³ The Roman deities did not have enough resonance with the native population to ensure their continuation as functioning cult locations.

Natural disaster can also be seen to have had an effect on the maintenance of some pagan cults. The extramural Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Cyrene was largely abandoned as a religious site following an earthquake in A.D. 262.²⁴ Similar problems may have precipitated the destruction of pagan cultic buildings at Cyrene a century later. The earthquake of 365, which will be dealt with further below, at least partly destroyed the Sanctuary of Apollo and the Temple of Zeus whilst definitively ending any residual occupation at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone.²⁵ Total abandonment of a site in the Late Roman period, before the Theodosian closure of the temples seems to be relatively rare, although this may be more to do with the problems of dating an absence of cultic practice than the reuse of a structure. Additionally, 19th and early 20th c. excavations that targeted the structure of the temple rarely bothered with preserving the abandonment layers. Sections demonstrating the stratigraphy of a temple site including post-occupation levels are relatively hard to come by in North Africa, making it impossible to judge the proportion of sites that were simply left to the elements after the temples were closed. Crucially, any abandonment of individual sanctuaries at a city is not an indicator of loss of respect for all of the old cults; changing fashions could result in cults waxing and waning in importance and popularity over time. It is only when we place abandonment along-

²² Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 29.

²³ Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 150–59.

²⁴ White (1984) 93–103, 118–19.

²⁵ Goodchild *et al.* (1958) 39–41; White (1977–78) 31–41; Bayliss (2004) 125.

side other 4th c. processes that major changes in approaches to the old pagan religions can be demonstrated. Given these issues and the nature of the archaeological evidence it would be extremely difficult to state that the abandonment of any individual temple, or even temples more generally, was due to imperial pressure, much less proactive involvement, before the late 4th c.

REUSE OF TEMPLE SITES AND FABRIC

As observed, the desertion of a temple site could be due to various factors—natural disaster, population movement, or the decreasing popularity or relevance of an individual cult. Once a temple site had been vacated there were numerous approaches that a community could take to its remains. Some shrines remained abandoned, others, or at least elements of their ornamentation, were quickly recycled either to produce new buildings or to repair other structures. There is a substantial difference between using the destroyed remains of the temple, or elements of it, and the actual conversion of a temple building for a new use; the latter will be dealt with in a different section. The process of destruction and reuse was legal if it took place within the jurisdiction of the appropriate authorities. As a law of 397 iterates, it was permissible for materials from temples to be reused in the (re) construction of walls, aqueducts, roads and bridges—i.e. state/civic structures.²⁶

Yet, abandoned temple sites were even being reused in the 2nd c., as at Thamusida, where a Flavian temple was abandoned, and new buildings occupied its site; the cult itself may have been rehoused in a nearby temple, the so-called '*Grand temple*', which was constructed in the later 2nd c.²⁷ In Africa temples appear to be abandoned and their sites reused with increasing regularity during the first half of the 4th c. At Balagrae, near Cyrene, parts of the Sanctuary of Aesculapius had been decommissioned and a dwelling was built within the complex's theatre.²⁸ The building's construction is unfortunately undated, but its destruction layer contained a coin deposit dated to before 365; the

²⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.36.

²⁷ Barton (1982) 310.

²⁸ Goodchild (1966–67) 230–32.

nature of the destruction suggests that it was the earthquake of that year that ended occupation at the site.

Further to the west, Tripolitania contains a second group of temples that were destroyed in the mid-4th c. In this case, the context of the destructive episode in the early 360s is highly important. There is still considerable debate as to whether or not Sabratha and Tripolitania suffered from an earthquake during the mid-4th c. or whether the *Austoriani* wrought the damage.²⁹ Also, if there was an earthquake was this connected with the seismic event of 365, described by Ammianus, as has been frequently proposed?³⁰ At Sabratha, the event seemingly left some temples prey to being stripped for their architectural components, such as the columns of the Temple of Serapis, the Antonine Temple and the South Forum Temple, all used in the reconstruction of the civil basilica.³¹ This may be an extreme example and the destruction may have made it impossible to rebuild all of the temples, but, importantly, it was the civil basilica rather than a temple that was prioritised for repair work.³² Along the coast at Lepcis Magna similar processes and results can be documented, with natural disasters again linked to much of the damage and subsequent abandonment. A destructive episode in the early 4th c. has been postulated as forcing the abandonment of some temples, the Flavian Temple and the Temple of Serapis being abandoned even before the destruction of the 360s. The Flavian Temple had been transformed into a house before then and thereafter was converted into housing and pottery workshops.³³ The Temple of Serapis was partially destroyed in the early 4th c. and was definitively out of commission after the 360s.³⁴

At Cuicul in Numidia, where two temples were destroyed or damaged during the course of the 4th c., their dismantlement may instead

²⁹ Amm. Marc. 28.6.4 for the depredations of the *Austoriani*. There is copious literature on the putative episode, including: Ambraseys (1994) 7–22; Di Vita (1990) 425–94; Foucher (1984) 91–95; Goodchild *et al.* (1958) 39–40; Jacques and Bousquet (1984) 423–61; Lepelley (1984) 463–91; Lepelley (2001) 203–14; Kelly (2004) 141–67; Mattingly (1993) 180–81. The earthquake is more likely to have damaged cities in *Libya Superior*, as the proposed epicentre to the south of Crete is considerably closer to Cyrenaica than Tripolitania.

³⁰ Amm. Marc., 26.10.12–19.

³¹ Kenrick (1986) 68.

³² Kenrick (1986) 80–83.

³³ Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 92; Mattingly (1993) 185. At a late date burials were placed into the remains. See Leone (2007) 167.

³⁴ Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 105.

have followed an extended period of abandonment. The site of the Temple of Frugifer had a secular basilica and a house built over it between 364 and 367 and the House of the Donkey encroached upon the Temple of Venus Genetrix during the 4th c.³⁵ The Temple of Frugifer is noteworthy as it points to the difficulty of creating a simple narrative for the 'fate of the temples' in North Africa. The date of the temple's abandonment and even its absolute destruction are unknown, but it was replaced by a basilica under the direction of Publius Caecina Albinus—clearly even a high profile pagan governor was amenable to the removal of pagan cult places if it improved the urban environment. In neighbouring Proconsularis, at Mactar, a structure in honour of Constantius II and Julian was built in 357, using architectural elements from the Temple of Liber Pater.³⁶ Lepelley claims that a desecralised imperial cult had taken the place of a patron deity of the city and interprets the destruction of the temple as a Christian inspired act. However, both statements may be reading too much into the situation.³⁷ It is by no means certain that the destruction can be ascribed to Christian activity, and as such the reutilisation of parts of the temple structure for an imperial monument may say more about the availability of easy-to-use material than about the supplanting of a traditional religious cult with secular imperial honours.

The Vandal and Byzantine periods demonstrate the continuation of earlier trends, with temples being demolished to have other structures built over them. It would seem that the reuse of temple sites in earlier periods was different in nature to that of the 5th and 6th c. however: the Christian Byzantine authorities charged with securing their reconquered domains unsurprisingly had little respect for the pagan heritage within them, and there are several examples of temples being destroyed so that their stone could be incorporated into a Byzantine fortress or because the forum of a city (where the temples were) had been selected as the place for one of these structures.³⁸ For example, at Thamugadi, the Byzantine fortress was built over the Aqua Septimiana Felix and

³⁵ Temple of the Frugifer: Blanchard-Lemée (1975) 172. House of the Donkey: Allais (1953) 64 and Blanchard-Lemée (1975) 46.

³⁶ Lepelley (1981) 292–93; *AE* (1955) 51.

³⁷ Lepelley (1981) 293: "La destruction du temple païen est certainement imputable à la influence chrétienne: il est significatif que la culte imperial, sous la form désacralisée qu'il revêt à partir de Constantin, ait pris la place du culte du dieu".

³⁸ Other examples of this process can be seen at Tubernuc and Vallis: Barton (1982) 318–19.

its temples, and at Thugga a series of temples were demolished so that their building material could be used in the wall that was constructed around the forum.³⁹ Other temples were reused for housing or other structures: at Sitifis a temple site was invaded by housing, a continuation of a process already noted at Lepcis and Cuicul in the 4th c.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what state the temples were in by the time of this Byzantine reuse, but after 140 years, if they had not been reused for some other purpose, they must have been severely dilapidated. The use of building material from the abandoned temples for new purposes is likely to have been seen as a positive absorption of redundant structures by contemporaries.

The reuse of temple sites for new purposes was perhaps not a new phenomenon in North Africa, but one that increased from the mid-4th c. onwards until, during the Byzantine period, whole groups of sacred sites saw reuse as parts of fortifications. This late antique reuse should not be a surprise given the laws against sacrifice, the growing influence of Christianity and the gradual reduction of evidence for temple repair in the course of the 4th c. Whether it was because of this lack of repair, the passage of time or because of more specific events (such as fires or natural disaster), during the 4th and 5th centuries more and more temple sites fell into ruins. The extent to which that mattered to the inhabitants of the African cities will now be discussed.

CONVERSION AND AESTHETIC PRESERVATION

In the later 4th c., temples started to be converted for new uses, even before the laws that definitively closed the temples. The archaeology to demonstrate this process is not strong, again largely because of the nature of the excavations at many of these sites: the recording of the late antique levels was frequently poor and does not help us comprehend the changes in temple use. As such, the best evidence for

³⁹ Thugga: Poinssot (1958) 39; Pringle (1981) 232–36; Saint-Amans (2004) 299, 301, 317–18; Thamugadi: Pringle (1981) 244–46; Wild (1984) 1826. At Lepcis Magna the temples of *Liber Pater* and that of Rome and Augustus were demolished by the time the Byzantine Wall was built: Haynes (1956) 88–89.

⁴⁰ Fentress (1990) 126. Elsewhere at Sabratha the Capitolium and the East Forum Temple were converted for new uses during the Byzantine period: Barton (1982) 300–301; Kenrick (1986) 32, 114.

this process is often epigraphic. This evidence demonstrates a range of uses for former temples. At Thubursicum Bure between 371 and 373 a temple may have been reused, although the details of the circumstances are far from clear, while a much clearer transformation occurred at Madauros where the Temple of Fortune was used for commercial activities under Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius.⁴¹ At Abthugni in Byzacena, the Capitol appears to have been reused after 388–92.⁴² Although the inscription is badly damaged, it does refer to the *cellae* of the *capitolium* and spaces that had been vacant.⁴³ Lepelley suggests that non-religious meetings were held in the building in line with laws of the Theodosian Code that permitted and encouraged putting the temples to new applications.⁴⁴

Archaeological evidence from Thuburbo Maius may provide physical confirmation of this process. There, installations for the use of oil started to be inserted into temples apparently during the late 4th and 5th centuries, for instance the Capitol had oil-decanting basins placed into its basement and further decanting basins were placed in the immediate vicinity of the Small Temple.⁴⁵ This dating is imprecise as it is largely based on mosaics within the oil production areas, but provides a very general framework for change. The basements of temples, located under their podia, had often been used as temple treasuries or storage in any case, and it may have been a relatively minor step to convert them for new purposes. Who owned the oil basins may be important in determining how much of a psychological and legal shift this reuse indicates. If the city itself owned these oil production facilities we might postulate less of a rupture with earlier traditions than if they had been taken over by private individuals. Certainly the laws of the Theodosian Code approve the preservation of the temples, providing that illicit activities are not taking place in them.⁴⁶ Indeed, more than one law issued in the 5th c. emphasises that temples

⁴¹ Thubursicum Bure temple: *CIL* 8. 1447; Lepelley (1981) 208. Conti views this as a dedication of a temple: Conti (2006) 888. Temple of Fortune at Madauras: *ILAlg.* 1. 2103; Lepelley (1981) 130.

⁴² *CIL* 8 supplement i. 11205=*CIL* 8. 928 ; Lepelley (1981) 265.

⁴³ *CIL* 8 supplement i. 11205=*CIL* 8. 928, line 3: *in cellis capi...*; Lepelley (1981) 265 n. 4. *CIL* 8 supplement i. 11205=*CIL* 8. 928, line 5: *spatia quae fuerant vacu...*; Lepelley (1981) 265 n. 4, 266.

⁴⁴ Lepelley (1981) 265–67. For instance: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 that probably deals with a specific situation in Edessa.

⁴⁵ Alexander *et al.* (1980) xxiii, 76.

⁴⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 and 18.

should become public property under the control of the decurions.⁴⁷ The official nature of the conversions at Madauros, Thubursicum and Abthugni are probably an appropriate parallel for the developments at Thuburbo.

At least some of the motivation for conversion may have been because of a desire on the part of the city councils of Africa to preserve their monumental heritage and the beauty of their cities. Abandoned and decaying temples can hardly have helped the image of a city, and by reusing the sites of delapidated temples, or converting other shrines for the benefit of the community, the elite could maintain the urban fabric whilst not violating the anti-pagan laws. One use that a closed temple could be put to was as a museum, preserving statuary and artwork from other decayed sites around the city. This is specifically mentioned in the Theodosian Code as an acceptable reason for keeping temple buildings open (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8). In terms of the archaeology, the translocation of statues can be seen at several African cities, although the process is impossible to date accurately. For example, at Bulla Regia the Temple of Apollo, located on the north side of the forum, had several statues placed there at some stage during the late antique period.⁴⁸ Another possible case comes from Sabratha, where busts of Jupiter and Concordia and a statuette of Caelestis were discovered in the podium of the Capitolium. Although Haynes characterises this as statues being “dumped there as refuse”, this may rather show a will to preserve the images of the gods in an appropriate setting that was no longer being used as a locus for sacrifice.⁴⁹

The decision to reuse temples as museums—which can be paralleled in the use of the West Baths at Caesarea and the Theatre at Dougga as locations for transferred statuary—demonstrates care for the city’s heritage.⁵⁰ The use of the Temple of Apollo as a museum served to protect both statues and temple building. Pagans could preserve their heritage by such measures under the guise of antiquarianism. Not all statues could be protected by temple-museums, however. At Carthage one individual or community clearly did not have the option to use a

⁴⁷ *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.41 and *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.19.2.

⁴⁸ Quoniam (1952) 466.

⁴⁹ Haynes (1956) 118.

⁵⁰ *CIL* 8. 20963 and 20965; Gsell (1952) 116; Quoniam (1952) 466; Leveau (1984) 52–53; Thébert (2003) 191–92. At Caesarea the West Baths held a series of statue bases with *translata de sordentibus locis* inscribed on them.

temple in this way, or did not feel that they made for secure locations; instead, at the end of the 4th c., a group of statues were hidden in a secret room in a house.⁵¹ Christian activities, which will be further discussed below, could make the gathering together of pagan statuary into one location a dangerous proposition. The formation of the Carthage cache may have been a response to the desecration of some of the statues (but see Caseau (this volume) 491).

The intersection between care for a city's aesthetics and the preservation of its heritage may also be evinced by the reconstruction of temple porticoes, such as at Thamugadi's Capitulum. Concern for image could have motivated the replacement of temples ruined by the deleterious effects of earthquake, fire and time. A good example of this can be seen at Sabratha, where the destroyed East Forum Temple was hidden away by a 4th c. portico.⁵² At some stage the Sabrathan elite had decided to cut the building off from the forum, as it was no longer part of the monumental fabric of the city centre. In a period where explicit reconstruction of temples, or elements of temple complexes, as religious structures does not appear to have been a possibility for many communities, the conversion of temple sites for public use and the preservation of temples (and other structures) as art galleries could be seen as attempts to preserve the old pagan, urban topography in a new way.

There is considerable evidence then of African communities preserving temples, or elements of what could be considered their pagan heritage, through a concern for the fabric of their city. The translocation of statues, repair of sanctuary facades and the reuse of temples as meeting places all indicate that many city councils were not prepared to accept the disintegration of their civic landscapes.

DELIBERATE DESTRUCTIONS BY CHRISTIANS

Abandonment and conversion of temples before Theodosius' laws was not a systematic process pushed along by Christian fanatics. At Sabratha, Lepcis Magna and Cyrene, where much of the best archaeological evidence comes from, abandonment appears to be connected

⁵¹ Gauckler (1899) 156–65.

⁵² Kenrick (1986) 32–33; Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 44.

to specific destructive episodes. In these cases, it may be less that the city population wished to abandon their religious heritage, than that they were unable to cope with the increased demands of repairing their cities following the problems that they endured. The examples of repair or rebuilding in individual cities, for instance construction work on the basilicas of Sabratha or Cuicul, suggests that some city councils, when faced with the need to undertake large scale reconstruction work, did not prioritise temple repair. By the mid-4th c. the local elites at these cities were unable, or no longer wished, to repair damaged temples. However, there is no evidence for any wholesale process of conversion of temples, either for religious or secular purposes, through the majority of the 4th c. Temples were not converted for Christian use during this period, and there is little evidence for militant Christian action against the temples. The new faith was not responsible for, nor gained anything from, changes to the pagan religious topography.

Although some temples were being put to secular use later, it is the activities of Christian militants that are the most eye-catching facet of temple destruction. Abandonment and accidental destruction, sometimes followed by reuse, are a quite different set of processes to the deliberate destruction of elements of the pagan religious landscape by Christians. Although abandonment, reuse and deliberate destruction can be linked, in that all were no doubt influenced by religious change and the growing dominance of Christianity, the use of violence to achieve political ends and to forcibly alter the urban topography, is a markedly different approach. The archaeological evidence for the use of violence to destroy pagan sacred places is relatively uncommon in North Africa, but it did occur with increasing regularity during the course of the 4th c., several cases of which are described in the literary material.

It could be argued that violence against pagan cults was not a novel phenomenon for North Africa.⁵³ The Jewish revolt in A.D. 115–17 had led to the destruction of many temples at Cyrene: the Temple of Hecate was expressly stated as being destroyed during the ‘Jewish Tumult’, whilst the Temple of Apollo was said to have needed rebuilding following a war.⁵⁴ Following Eusebius, commentators generally believe that the messianic character of the Jewish revolt had led

⁵³ Goodchild *et al.* (1958) 33–34.

⁵⁴ Temple of Hecate: *SEG* 9. 168. Temple of Apollo: *SEG* 9. 189.

to iconoclasm, but given that the Roman baths and buildings near the Caesareum also appear to have been damaged in the same episode, Goodman is right to question whether pagan cults were specifically targeted or whether temples were damaged incidentally in the inter-community violence.⁵⁵ In any case, while this episode demonstrates that late antique intolerance directed towards pagan statues was nothing new, there is no evidence that Christian militants looked back to the revolt for inspiration.

Like with the 2nd c. Jewish revolt, 4th and 5th c. literature can be used to demonstrate that attacks on pagan religious structures took place. Outside Egypt, attacks on temples in North Africa in written accounts tend to concentrate on the divine image rather than the built temple. In the case of Saint Salsa at Tipasa, who was martyred following her destruction of the idol of Draco, there is no indication that she damaged, nor that she intended to damage, the temple itself.⁵⁶ Her martyrdom came after she cast the idol into the sea during a festival in honour of the god. The text is problematic as a comparator for archaeological evidence as the date of the event (and, for that matter, the text) is not secure. Monceaux suggested that it might be Constantinian or mid-4th c., but it could have been earlier.⁵⁷ More useful might be events at Sufes in 408, where Christians destroyed a statue of Hercules, prompting the local pagan community to riot, which led to the death of several Christians. Augustine's acerbic response to the pagans' pleas for clemency demonstrates a fundamental lack of sympathy for their feelings.⁵⁸ Gauckler's late 4th c. mutilated cache of statues at Carthage, seems to be an example of the sort of damage practised against the images of Draco and Hercules.⁵⁹ These attacks came despite admonitions by the Christian authorities, including Augustine, that such behaviour would not bring rewards in heaven, and the title of martyr would not be conferred if the individual were killed whilst

⁵⁵ Iconoclasm: Fuks (1961) 104; Smallwood (1976) 399. Baths: *AfrIt.* 1. 221. Buildings near Caesareum: Fraser and Applebaum (1950) 89. Temple damage: Goodman (2007) 480.

⁵⁶ *Passio Sanctae Salsae* (ed. Piredda (2002)). The robbery of the treasury of a Serapeum by Purpurius of Limata might also be relevant here: *Gesta Apud Zenophilum* 15–20 (Opt. 10).

⁵⁷ Monceaux (1905) 166.

⁵⁸ August. *Ep.* 50.

⁵⁹ Gauckler (1899) 156–65. The cache is dated on the basis of the style of the mosaic sealing the deposit.

taking part in such activity.⁶⁰ That is not to say that Augustine was particularly sorry when Christians did destroy pagan sacred items, and his warnings may have more to do with a desire to maintain ecclesiastical discipline and keep his community within the law than an active toleration of pagan religious sites.⁶¹

Cyrene provides a useful case study for archaeologically-attested human destruction of temples and idols. There, a series of cult places and idols may have suffered vandalism, probably post-dating the mid-4th c. earthquake: the Temple of Zeus, in addition to considerable earthquake damage, seems to show traces of an intense fire, beyond what would be expected from a fire caused by an earthquake, which obliterated its interior; the idol of Zeus itself had been smashed into pieces.⁶² The disfiguring of statuary from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone outside of the city mirrors this obliteration of the statue of Zeus.⁶³ Elsewhere in the city, temples B and C on the valley road show traces of a conflagration and dismantling, and the dedicatory inscription to Commodus from temple B was also destroyed and burned.⁶⁴ But these insults to the gods do not seem to have been part of a consistent campaign across all of the city's temples. The ruined statues can be contrasted vividly with the so-called Temple of Bacchus, whose statues were still intact. The disorganised nature of the destruction is also demonstrated on the Acropolis where the Temple of Serapis demonstrated burning, whilst the neighbouring temple showed no marks of fire.⁶⁵ Ad hoc though it may have been, the evidence from Cyrene suggests that however ill-organised and patchy anti-pagan vandalism was, when it came the destruction could be great.

The date of this vandalism has been variously placed in the 3rd, 4th or early 5th c. White argued that the destruction at the Wadi Bel Gadir Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone was due to an earthquake in A.D. 262, the revolt of the *Marmaridae* in 268/70 or occurred

⁶⁰ August. *Serm.* 62, 18, *Contra Gaudentium* 1. 28, 32 and *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* 1.10, 16, *Ep.* 185.3.12.

⁶¹ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 and 18.

⁶² Goodchild *et al.* (1958) 31, 34, 40.

⁶³ Ward-Perkins and Balance (1958) 157; White (1971) 85–104; White (1977–8) 35; White (1984) 1 n. 3

⁶⁴ Goodchild (1961) 83–95.

⁶⁵ Roques (1987) 320.

after 365.⁶⁶ Roques advocated a date in the reign of Julian, basing his hypothesis on the lack of dated temple construction in 3rd c. Cyrenaica and the absence of pagan building inscriptions of the 4th c. This suggested to him that paganism was dying in the early 4th c. and that friction during Julian's reign would have provided the ideal catalyst for change.⁶⁷ Given the repair work on statues at the Temple of Isis in the city, this now seems highly unlikely, and in any case fails to consider the downturn in documented repair across the whole of Africa and the empire more generally in the post-Severan era.⁶⁸ Goodchild dated the destruction to the official closure of the temples under Theodosius I, while Stucchi believed that the devastation occurred in the reign of Theodosius II, connecting it to Theodosius' edict of 435 that ordered destruction of all temples and shrines.⁶⁹ The post-391 date or a date in the reign of Theodosius II seems to fit the available evidence much more neatly than other hypotheses.⁷⁰

The number of instances of archaeologically recorded, deliberate, religiously inspired, temple destruction, seems to be relatively low. It also seems to be an ad hoc process on both a regional and citywide level; there is no indication that any organised campaign to annihilate all temples and pagan statuary at any individual city took place. This could be said to be an argument from silence; a lack of properly excavated temple sites in the region means that it is difficult to draw conclusions about the process of their decommissioning, but it does not seem to be an unreasonable conclusion.

CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

Several African temple-church conversions have been dated to the late 4th to early 5th c. period.⁷¹ In terms of practicalities, the most

⁶⁶ Earthquake: White (1984) 93–103, 118–19. Revolt or after A.D. 365: White (1977–78) 35.

⁶⁷ Roques (1987) 321.

⁶⁸ Ensoli Vittozzi (1992) 242.

⁶⁹ Stucchi (1975) 442–44, *Cod. Theod.* 16.10. 25.

⁷⁰ Other examples in Cyrenaica: Cyrene—Temple E6 on the agora had been burnt: Stucchi (1963) 307; at Balagrae the inscription on the frieze of the *temenos* of Asklepios was obliterated: Roques (1987) 320; a Byzantine example might come from Ghirza: Modéran (2003) 633, 645–82.

⁷¹ See Sears (2007).

common method of temple conversion appears to have been to rearrange the columns in a colonnaded temple court to form the naves of the church. The rest of the church was then constructed around these columns with the façade of the temple often being used in some way. In such temple-court conversions the *cella* was often re-employed as a baptistery or an out-building. Hanson has argued that the failure to use the *cella* for the actual church indicates continued fear of ritual pollution, even if other temple structures were being utilised.⁷² This seems to be privileging the *cella* over the rest of the temple complex too much; the chief cult statue was situated there but given that sacred rites would have taken place throughout the temple grounds, and that altars, stele and statues were not confined to the *cella*, it would seem strange if Christians ideologically separated it from the rest of the temple in such a way. Additionally, baptism was an integral part of Christian life. Ritual pollution would surely have caused just as many problems in the baptistery as in the nave, and the conversion of *cellae* into baptisteries would seem to have been due to simple spatial concerns: *cellae* would simply have been too small to be used as a worship place for burgeoning Christian congregations.

Examples of temple-church conversions of the late 4th to early 5th c. are claimed at Sufetula, Mactar, Thuburbo Maius, Lepcis Magna, Thamugadi, Tipasa in Mauretania and Cyrene; however, much of the dating for these transformations is problematic. There is not enough room here to go into detail regarding all of the temple conversions, but a few examples taken from across the region will help to elucidate some of the issues. The lack of rigour in some conversion dating is epitomised by Picard's statement regarding the date of a temple conversion at Mactar: "Vers le milieu du IV^e siècle sans doute, la communauté chrétienne de Mactar prit possession du temple de Saturne et l'adapta, sans efforts excessifs, aux besoins de son culte"—but absolutely no evidence is offered to support this assertion.⁷³ It is based more on assumptions about North African society and the strength of Christianity in the 4th c. than archaeological evidence.

Other examples have been dated using better evidence, but there are few clear-cut interpretations of the archaeology. For instance,

⁷² Hanson (1985) 347.

⁷³ Picard (1984) 27; Duval (1989b) 140. Picard also believes that the Temple of Hoter Miskar at Mactar was converted into a church in the second half of the 4th c.: Picard (1988) 17.

Gui and Duval dated the conversion of the so-called New Temple at Tipasa largely on stylistic grounds.⁷⁴ The form of the pillars suggested to them that the decoration might be analogous to the Church of Saint Salsa at Tipasa that Christern had dated to *ca.* A.D. 400, on the basis of the 4th c. coins found around the sarcophagus of the saint.⁷⁵ The excavator Baradez also suggested a 4th c. date for the New Temple on the basis of the pottery, but without giving much detail.⁷⁶ Given the largely stylistic and comparative grounds for dating the conversion, the temple-church cannot be said to be a secure late 4th or early 5th c. example of the transformation of the pagan religious topography for Christian use, even if that remains a possibility.

The dating of the temple-church in the Forum Vetus at Lepcis Magna is also problematic. In this case only the podium of the temple remained in use, and the structure of the church was built over it, rather than a court being altered to take a church. Goodchild and Ward-Perkins dated the church to the first half of the 5th c. on the basis that the church was earlier than the Justinianic baptistery, that many of the tombs point to a pre-Byzantine date and there are structural parallels with the 5th c., south-forum Sabrathan church.⁷⁷ The problems come with the specifics for the pre-Byzantine date. Their assigning of an early date is speculative as it is based on historical preconceptions that a Late Vandal date was unlikely for a highly elaborate church. Again they may be correct, but only further evaluation and excavation could confirm this.⁷⁸ Elsewhere, the Temple-Church at Thuburbo Maius has been dated to the 4th c. on the basis of its mosaics, Church I at Timgad has been suggested to be pre-Vandal purely on the basis of its structure and appearance and Church III at Sufetula has been tentatively dated to the end of the 4th c. on the grounds that the liturgical arrangements are very similar to those of Church I in the city.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Gui *et al.* (1992) 27.

⁷⁵ Gui *et al.* (1992) 27 and 40.

⁷⁶ Baradez (1961) 221–23.

⁷⁷ Goodchild and Ward-Perkins (1953) 31; Teichner (1996) 56.

⁷⁸ Goodchild and Ward-Perkins (1953) 29.

⁷⁹ Thuburbo Maius: Ben Abed-Ben Khader, *et al.* (1985) 55. Timgad: Gui *et al.* (1992) 263–65. Sufetula: Duval (1973) 276; (1982) 618; Duval (1989a) 375. It is possible Church I of Bellator was also built over a temple: Duval (1971) 85; Duval (1982) 617. Two examples at Cyrene, the Temple of Apollo and one of the Valley Street temples, have been proposed as temple-church conversions, but the evidence for both

It is difficult to make definitive statements on the frequency and phasing of conversions of temples for Christian use in the late 4th and early 5th c., let alone explain the ideologies behind the transformations. First, the dating of the majority of the conversions is at best opaque and at worst non-existent. This obviously leads to difficulties in establishing the circumstances under which the conversions took place. A good example of this is the debate between Roques, Goodchild and Stucchi over the date of the end of pagan cults in Cyrenaica. The temptation to connect the changes to specific historical events or actions, in this case the laws of Theodosius I and II and the reign of Julian, rather than relying on the archaeological evidence, is clearly strong. Second, even where there are indications of date, the excavations have rarely provided any evidence for the circumstances of the conversion. In particular, it would be useful to know how long the converted temples had been out of use before they were transformed into churches. At present, it seems that the best that can be said is that several temples seem to have been converted by Christian communities during the late 4th c. but the circumstances in which these transformations occurred remain a matter for debate. On the other hand, there is more reliable evidence for the exact dating of the conversion of some temples for secular use. The epigraphic evidence demonstrates specific cases where temples were altered for new uses in the 4th c., while Augustine provides further, more general, evidence about the widespread nature of the changes to the sacred topography in the period.

Some temple-church conversions seem to date to the Byzantine period, and if some of the insecure dating of the proposed late 4th and early 5th c. examples dealt with above is incorrect, and they are in fact later, this process may have been very widespread in the post-Roman phase. The conversions of a temple at Djebel Oust, the Temple of Jupiter Dolichenus and the small *templum in antis* conversion, both at Lepcis Magna, the Temple of Caelestis at Thuburbo Maius, the Capitolium at Constantine and the Temple near the Arch of Caracalla at Theveste have all been dated to the Byzantine period.⁸⁰

is ephemeral: Teichner (1996) 54–56; Stucchi (1975) 335; Goodchild (1971) 119; Ward-Perkins, Goodchild and Reynolds (2005) 12.

⁸⁰ Djebel Oust temple: Duval (1973) 290–292; Caillet (1996) 198. Jupiter Dolichenus: Goodchild and Ward-Perkins (1953) 31–34; Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 119–21; Teichner (1996) 57. *Templum in antis*: Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 122–25; Teichner

Again, the dating of many of these cases is still problematic, and the fate of other sites is also disputed. Nevertheless, this process becomes more common in the 6th c. and with the contemporary utilisation of many other shrines for Byzantine military purposes, it is clear that the pagan landscape was being transformed to suit the needs of a different community and state.

Because of the dating of the process of temple conversion in North Africa is uncertain, it means there are problems in assessing when any process started in earnest and the motives behind it. The evidence, as it is currently interpreted, points to two principal phases of conversion: one in the late 4th to early 5th c. and another under the Byzantines. If these phases reflect any reality, there are many potential interpretations of the evidence to explain the pattern. The evidence seems to indicate an initial phase of conversion in the era of Theodosius I's crackdown on paganism, perhaps spurred on by the competition between the Catholic and Donatist Churches, and a phase of renewed church construction amid a Catholic renaissance after the Byzantine reconquest. By the 6th c., and the reconquest, the empire was definitively Christian and paganism in North Africa could have been presented (how accurately it is impossible to say) as the preserve of the 'barbarian' tribes on the frontier.⁸¹ An absence of conversion in the later 5th c. could perhaps be interpreted as a consequence of the suppression of Catholicism and Donatism under the Vandals, while they made provision for their own worship through the construction of specifically Arian buildings and by the seizure of existing Catholic churches.⁸²

An alternative explanation for the apparent caesura might be that although the temple conversions in the late 4th and early 5th c. produced a phase of change inspired by Christian militants in a small

(1996) 57–58. Thuburbo Maius: Ben Abed-Ben Khader *et al.* (1985) 47–50. Constantine: Barton (1982) 285; Gui *et al.* (1992) 205–207. Theveste: Gsell (1901) I. 137. Poinssot also suggested that the Capitol at Thugga might have been transformed into a church on the basis of its division into three 'nave' like spaces by arcades on reused bases. Barton (1982) 316–17 thinks that this merely reflects the original floor support; cf. Pringle (1981) 245.

⁸¹ Procop. *Vand.* 1.8.15, 2.8.9 and *Aed.* 6.2.14–20 for paganism at the Oasis of Augila, *Aed.* 6.3.9–10 for the conversion to Christianity of Ghadames under Justinian, *Aed.* 6.4.12 for the conversion to Christianity of the Gadabitani under Justinian; Corippus *Iohannis*, 2.100, 2.400, 5.495, 6.115, 6.145–70, 6.190–91, 6.560; 7.515; 7.255; 8.300–20 for the paganism of the Libyan tribes.

⁸² Victor Vit. 1.9

number of cities, this work was always limited and tailed off due to continued adherence to pagan beliefs among local aristocracies during the 5th c. Christian unease at reusing the 'abodes of demons' may have played a part in limiting conversion in the course of the 5th c. Although not documented in Africa, in the eastern empire and in Rome fear of the dark spiritual power hidden in temples and within idols persisted, and seems to have prevented temples being converted until the late 5th c. or later.⁸³ Such feelings are not documented among African Christians, however, and while it may be that the small number of conversions in Africa during the later Roman empire were novelties, this may not have been due to terror of the consequences of occupying such locations.

It has to be admitted that all of these hypotheses are built on poor dating evidence and assumptions about the Christianised Roman empire in the later 4th c. Clearly, much more archaeological work, free from preconceived ideas, needs to be undertaken on unexcavated temples across the region to see how common temple-church conversions were, when they occur, and for how long the sites lay abandoned beforehand.

CONCLUSION

The pagan built environment in North Africa changed markedly during Late Antiquity. Yet it is important to note that many of these changes had their precursors in the Early Imperial period and were not in and of themselves entirely new. In basic terms, the trajectory of change in Late Antiquity starts with temples occasionally being built, but more frequently repaired, in the late 3rd c. Repairs of temples and their precincts continues into the mid-4th c., although with much reduced frequency as the century progressed. During the same period there is increasing evidence of temple destruction and their replacement with new buildings. In the examples discussed above this can often be connected with natural disasters, but this may be partly a consequence of the best evidence coming from areas that were hit by

⁸³ Niederer (1953) 176–77; Mango (1963) 53–76; Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 50; Salzman (1999) 130; Bayliss (2004) 59–61.

earthquakes and invasions in the mid-4th c. Subsequently, temples began to be converted for secular uses as city councils sought to preserve both their pagan heritage but also the image of their cities.

The imperative to preserve a city's appearance should not be underestimated as a motivation for conversion or even total destruction of damaged and abandoned temples. Several inscriptions commemorating repairs from the African provinces emphasise the ruinous nature of buildings, the fact that they have been in that state for some considerable time, and the benefactors expected praise for having remedied these problems.⁸⁴ At the moment it is epigraphy that provides the best evidence for the preservation of temples in new guises and further archaeological work would be most illuminating in addressing how common the reuse of temples was in the 4th c. and beyond. Excavation might also address how conversion took place, and the extent to which concern for the maintenance of key features of these buildings impacted on its reuse.

Anti-pagan activities by Christians seem to start in the late 4th/early 5th c. with the deliberate destruction of idols by Christian communities and the conversion of some temples into churches. As discussed above, there are problems with the dating for the temple conversion process but, while the lack of clear-cut evidence can provoke a debate as to when idol and temple destruction took place at Cyrene, for example, it is clear from Augustine's letters that the religious milieu of Africa *ca.* A.D. 400 was one where Christian militancy against the icons of paganism could take place. What is more difficult to answer is whether such activities were common. Further archaeological work is needed to help determine this.

The archaeological evidence for temple conversion is again poor, and for this there is no literary tradition describing African temples being converted for Christian use, but indications from elsewhere in the empire suggest that conversion before the later 5th c. was very rare. Fresh excavation targeted at conversion phases might help to settle the date of this process, but while fear of the power of *daemons*, coupled with continued pagan opposition to conversion, might have prevented this happening, the possibility of such changes taking place

⁸⁴ For instance, the judicial basilica at Cuicul, dedicated between 364 and 367, replaced a building that had fallen into ruins: *AE.* (1946) 107 = *CRAI.* (1943) 381–83.

in the late 4th/early 5th c. period should not be instinctively ruled out. Equally, the fevered competition for souls between African Christian sects, coupled with the militancy of some members of those sects, could have led to a different pattern of temple-church conversion in this region compared to elsewhere.

In summary, it is difficult to assess the processes affecting the temples of Africa and Cyrenaica archaeologically, and much more systematic work of the kind undertaken by Ensoli Vitozzi on the Temple of the Alexandrian Gods at Cyrene, and of Brogan and Smith at Ghirza, needs to be done to assess the process by which the temples were decommissioned and the frequency with which they were converted for secular or religious use. The key aspect to note is that the transformation of the built pagan landscape in Late Antiquity was not uniform or structured across the cities of Africa and Libya Superior. As such, although there are general trends, it would not be a surprise if individual cities demonstrated substantial differences in the rate and extent of transformation. The rate of Christianisation of the populace and elite of a city and the extent of militancy within a community may have impacted substantially on how the temples were treated. Further work is thus required in Africa, with examination of individual cities being the key to understanding small-scale city dynamics on which larger-scale studies of provincial and regional trends could be built.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ILTun = *Inscriptions latines de la Tunisie*

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TEMPLES IN THE EAST

LATE PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANISATION IN GREECE

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with the contribution of Demetrios Eliopoulos

Abstract

In Greece, late antique paganism is archaeologically attested at various sites, mainly through inscriptions, coins and pottery. Some of the aspects of late paganism examined here include evidence of early conversion to Christianity, the tenacity of paganism in Athens thanks to the Neoplatonic philosophers, and the preservation of Athens' temples as a consequence of the strength of the city's cultural traditions and the respect for its venerable past. Other manifestations of late paganism are attested: in the international pagan centre of Eleusis, that attracted members of the upper class; in the *taurobolium*, performed until late in a suburb of Athens; in cults at caves, fountains, wells and in private residences; and at the site of destroyed temples. The paper also examines conversion of temples into churches, the destruction of pagan statuary or its preservation for aesthetic reasons, and the incorporation of pagan cultic symbols in churches.

INTRODUCTION

In Greece, the persistence of paganism has been explained by a number of factors: by the strength of the philosophical schools;¹ by the secondary place the region occupied in the empire's economic and political life, in contrast to the more central provinces of the East; and by the absence of monasticism (except at Thessalonica).² In Greece, the establishment of Christianity and the final years of paganism are evident mainly in the archaeological record. Frequently, however, this evidence is uncertain as regards date and, because of the circumstances in which the transition to Christianity took place, it means that an array of interpretations has arisen. Literary sources, which

¹ Fowden (1982) 33–35.

² Gregory (1986) 235–36.

are almost exclusively pagan, offer some glimpses into the trends and circumstances of late paganism. Archaeological evidence provides some insights into the end of pagan temples. This phenomenon is traditionally linked either to supposed indifference on the part of late pagans, and the diminishing resources of the communities, or it is attributed to destruction by earthquakes and by the Herulian and Visigothic invasions.

As is the case for all areas of the empire, and Greece was no exception, old archaeological reports, whose focus was upon classical remains, pay little or no attention to the evidence from Late Antiquity. Any account of Christianity is also characterised by uncertainty and the use of circumstantial evidence. Thus, most Early Christian basilicas are dated on the grounds of the style of their sculptural elements and mosaics. Literary sources are silent for the most part, and we lack from this area hagiographical and homiletic texts, sources which saliently depict the advance of Christianity and the last years of paganism in other provinces of the East; Greece was geographically distant from the Holy Land which had become the focus of the Christian world and attracted pilgrims and saints. Arguably, inscriptions often illustrate the process of transition more clearly, for they define pagan cult and beliefs, and allude to an adherence to Christianity or declare Christian belief and victory; their vocabulary offers valuable insights into this period of transition and uncertainty. Furthermore, a small proportion of inscriptions are dated, thus providing secure evidence in this regard. Unfortunately, however, epigraphic evidence is limited, since the habit of erecting public inscriptions was in decline in Late Antiquity.

Our approach to describing late paganism in Greece and the transition to Christianity will consciously focus on particular sites whose archaeological record has been better studied than others. We place greater emphasis on the city of Athens for two reasons: first, because late paganism there is better known than in any other city of Greece, thanks to the surviving sources on the Neoplatonic school, and second, because the apparent phenomenon of the conversion of the Parthenon and its preservation requires interpretation. From other sites examples are drawn that, in our view, clearly illustrate various aspects of late paganism or early Christianity in Greece.

ATHENS

Belief and Cult in Public

Late paganism in Athens is directly related to the cultural position of the city during the Late Roman epoch, since it was at this time that it came to be regarded as the spiritual homeland of the intellectuals and philosophers of the empire. In this context, the transition of pagan monuments to Christian use can be better understood.³ The process by which Athens was recognised as the cultural centre of Greece and of the rest of the ancient world can be detected in various texts.⁴ In A.D. 130 Hadrian made Athens the centre of the *Panhellenion*, the centre of the Greek world; it was the seat of the *synedrion* that served as the arbiter of 'Greekness' and the forum for discussion of issues pertaining to this. The attraction that pagans felt for Athens and how far they recognised the city as a cultural and religious centre is illustrated in the writings of the Emperor Julian. He went to Athens before his accession to complete his studies in the summer of 355, and when leaving a few months later, he confessed, with a profound admiration and piety:

But what floods of tears I shed and what laments I uttered when I was summoned, stretching out my hands to your Acropolis and imploring Athene to save her suppliant and not to abandon me, many of you who were eyewitnesses can attest, and the goddess herself, above all others, is my witness that I even begged for death at her hands there in Athens rather than my journey to the Emperor. That the goddess accordingly did not betray her suppliant or abandon him she proved by the event. For everywhere she was my guide, and on all sides she set a watch near me, bringing guardian angels from Helios and Selene.⁵

In the 4th c., Athens remained pagan. The Panathenaic procession, the ancient festival of Athens honouring the patron goddess of the city, continued to be held. It has also been suggested that the honours to be given to Athene and Achilles in the dream of the hierophant Nestorius

³ See now the thoughts of Kaldellis (2009) 11–59.

⁴ Aelius Aristeidis praises the city in glorious terms. Plutarch reinvents classical Greece in his *Parallel Lives* and emphasises the predominance of the Athenian *Lives* over those of other cities. See Lamberton (1997).

⁵ Julian 5.275a (transl. W. C. Wright, Loeb). See also Libanius 12.38; Julian 2.119d, 6.260bc, 12.348bc, 8.159a. On the views and feelings of Julian for Athens see Athanassiadi (1992) 46–51, 84–85.

were intended to be part of the Panathenaic procession.⁶ From an honorific inscription, dated to the late 4th or the early 5th c., we learn that the Neoplatonic philosopher Plutarch (or another homonymous sophist) paid three times from his own money for the sacred ship of Athene to come in procession to the goddess's temple.⁷ Archiadas, Nestorius' great grandson, commented with profound religiosity that, if it was Athene who had ordered Plutarch to spend this money for the Panathenaia, the expense would be worthy of much more.⁸ The orator Himerius describes the Panathenaic procession, declaring how sweet and worthy of admiration (πάντως ἡδὺ καὶ ἀξιόγαστον) was it not only to see the Panathenaia, but also to talk about it to the Hellenes.⁹ The procession with the ship began at the gates of the city and passed along the Panathenaic Way, which was flanked by porticoes. The crew was composed of priests and priestesses, all drawn from renowned families and crowned with crowns of gold and flowers; the ship was carried to the column (κολώνον) of the Palace of Athene.¹⁰ The orator believed that from there the goddess observed the procession.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were still attracting renowned individuals. These included Neoplatonists, who emphasised intimate contact with the divine by means of mystic cults, endowing pagan religion with an aura of spirituality; Neoplatonist philosophers gave Athenian paganism an intellectuality and a particular identity.¹¹ Neoplatonists were actively involved in the pagan cult, such as the philosopher Plutarch, whose family was linked to the priesthood of Asclepius, and who is mentioned in a fragmentary inscription in connection to the god.¹²

In the 4th c. and even in the 5th, pagans at Athens did not always hide their feelings and religious convictions and occasionally demonstrated them in public. Thus one inscription records the restoration of the *bema* of the theatre of Dionysus built by the archon Phaedrus: it is addressed to the god as *philorgie* ('lover of passionate rites').¹³ An

⁶ Banchich (1998).

⁷ καὶ τρίς ποτὶ νηὸν Ἀθηναίης ἐπέλασεν / ναῦν ἐλάσας ἱερήν, πλοῦτον ὅλον προχέας: *IG* 2² 3818. Frantz (1988) 23–24, 63–64; Sironen (1994) 46–48; Sironen (1997) 77–78 (no. 20).

⁸ Suda (Archiadas).

⁹ Himer., *Or.* 47.12.

¹⁰ References to the ship are late. Now we have a 4th c. B.C. representation of the ship from a relief fragment found in Plaka in Athens: Spetsieri-Choremi (2000).

¹¹ Fowden (2000) 85–87.

¹² Sironen (1994) 48–50; Sironen (1997) 85–87 (no. 25).

¹³ *IG* 2/3² 5021; Sironen (1994) 43–45; Sironen (1997) 117–18 (no. 42).

inscription by Apronianus, sophist at Athens, records the erection of an honorific statue of the Prefect Herculus (A.D. 408–10) who is praised as the defender of laws; the statue was set up beside the statue of Pallas *Promachos*.¹⁴ The epitaph of Lachares, orator and philosopher during the reign of Leo (457–74), is revealing: the deceased is praised for excellence, when compared to all others, in piety and philosophy (εὐσεβείας καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ), and there is a reference to Zeus *aigiohoio*.¹⁵ We have some information on exactly what rites were taking place in the 4th c. A *taurobolium*, performed in 387, was recorded on various altar inscriptions.¹⁶ In 375, it was believed that Athens was saved from an earthquake after the hierophant Nestorius placed an image of Achilles beneath the statue of the goddess in the Parthenon and performed religious rituals before it.¹⁷

The Parthenon

The most important temple of Athens, the Parthenon, suffered damage in the invasion of the *Heruli* in A.D. 267, after which it was repaired, although the date of this repair remains uncertain.¹⁸ The columns of one or two of the surviving porticoes were employed to repair the interior colonnade. The roof, now made of clay instead of marble tiles, covered only the cella, thus leaving the peristyle open as a free-standing colonnade.¹⁹ These architectural changes indicate the restricted financial conditions in which the community was now operating in. The cult statue of Pheidias was restored, as traces of a new base indicate, although it had already lost its original appearance for the tyrant Lachares removed the golden dress of the goddess in 295 B.C.²⁰

The date of the conversion of the Parthenon to a Christian basilica has generated much discussion. From the archaeological point of view,

¹⁴ *IG* 2/3² 4225; Sironen (1994) 51–52; Sironen (1997) 82–84 (no. 23).

¹⁵ Kaibel (1878) 170.

¹⁶ See below, 284–86.

¹⁷ Zosimus 4.18. See Banchich (1998) who doubts that Nestorius was a priest of Eleusis.

¹⁸ On the place of the Parthenon in the history and culture of the city of Athens in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages see Kaldellis (2009). Date of repair: Travlos (1973); Frantz (1979).

¹⁹ Korres (1996) 140–46.

²⁰ Plut. *Mor.* 379D; Paus. 1.25.7, 1.29.16. For the statue of Athena in the Augustaeum of Constantinople and the various identifications proposed see Bassett (2004) 188–92.

the sculptural pieces that survived from the early basilica date to the 5th or 6th c., while the Christian inscriptions and graffiti on the Parthenon do not offer any more secure a date. Two texts are of value, however. Firstly, from the *Life of Proclus*, by Proclus' student and successor at the Academy, Marinus, we learn that Proclus, upon arrival at Athens from Alexandria shortly before A.D. 432, went up to the Acropolis, only to be told by the doorkeeper of the temple that he was about to close it. Marinus concluded that this was a clear omen, but it indicates to us that the temple was still functioning at the time.²¹ Proclus lived in Athens for more than half a century (430/32–85), in which time the Christian community gradually gained the upper hand. In the 5th c., Christian basilicas began to be constructed in the city. Marinus refers to the 'storm' blown by 'the breath of Typhonic winds' that forced him to leave Athens for a year. There is also reference to the 'giants-vultures', perhaps meaning the 'giants riding on vultures'—these being expressions alluding to Christians.²² According to Marinus, when the Parthenon was about to be closed by the Christians, the goddess Athene revealed to Proclus in a dream that her statue in the Parthenon was to be moved 'by those who move even the immovable'. This is a quote from Plato's *Theaetetus* (181a), a passage which discusses the theory that everything is in motion and the competing theory that everything is one and stationary. Undoubtedly, Marinus refers to the Christians, and the selected text from Plato may point to the inevitable change of religion in his own time. In this dream, the goddess Athene also told Proclus that he must prepare his house quickly, because she wanted to live with him.²³ Clearly the cult statue of the Parthenon had been removed before Proclus' death in 485.²⁴

The other useful text for our purposes is a passage within the so-called *Tübingen Theosophy* (named after the library where the manuscript is deposited), which contains an oracle concerning the conversion of the Parthenon into a church. The original work of 11 books, bearing the title *Theosophia* (*On True Belief*), is now largely lost, and its aim was to prove the superiority of the Christian religion over paganism. It is a product of the intellectual environment of the School of Alexandria

²¹ Marinus *Vita Procli* 10.

²² Marinus *Vita Procli* 15; see Saffrey (1975).

²³ Marinus *Vita Procli* 30. The dream is discussed by Stewart (2004) 340–42.

²⁴ For doubts as to whether the cult statue had been given by Christians to Proclus, or whether it could have fitted into Proclus' house, see Kaldellis (2009) 34.

and the conflicts that took place there between pagans and Christians. From this work derives the preserved abridged version (*epitome*) under the title *Oracles of the Greek Gods*, written at the end of the 5th or in the early 6th c.²⁵ According to the oracle, when the inhabitants of Cyzicus were about to convert the city's famous Temple of Rhea into a church, an oracle was found on a slab attached to the side of the temple. A similar one was found on the left side of the temple in Athens. The oracle delivered by Apollo announced the appearance of a triune God, whose *logos* would be conceived by a virgin, and he prophesied that the temple of Cyzicus will one day be dedicated to the Virgin Mary.²⁶

The existence of the oracle is attested in the second quarter of the 5th c. by Theodotus, bishop of Ancyra, and it refers to the Unknown God of Athens mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles* 17 during the visit of St. Paul to Athens. The bishop also refers to the famous passage of Virgil's *Eclogues* (4.5.7), which had been interpreted by Christian theologians as a prediction of the advent of Christ, in an effort to include classical tradition in the new religion.²⁷ The oracle is encountered again in a shorter collection of oracles with the title *Symponia* (Cod. Vatic. Gr. 2200). Recently, an inscription has come to light with a similar oracle found in an Early Christian basilica at Oinoe on the island of Ikaria, discussed by G. Deligiannakis in this volume.²⁸ It is obvious that such oracles were put in circulation by Christians in order to invest their new religion with pagan wisdom and authority. Such texts also allowed a degree of accommodation, namely the conversion of pagan temples to Christian churches, and were intended to satisfy all, Christians and pagans alike.

Although the conversion of the Parthenon into a Christian church appears to have been smooth, substantial architectural changes were made, without, however, altering the overall appearance of the pagan

²⁵ Athanassiadi (1999) 353–56 suggests the years between A.D. 474 and 491 for the production of the text, while Beatrice (2001) xxxiv–l prefers A.D. 502–503, claiming that the author was Severus, the monophysite Patriarch of Antioch.

²⁶ Tübingen Theosophy, 53–54 (ed. H. Erbse, *Theosophorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1995) 35–36; new edn. Beatrice (2001) xx–xxv, text: 1.54–55 (pp. 26–27)). Mango (1995); Busine (2005) 427–29.

²⁷ Thdot. Anc. *Homily on the Mother of God and the Nativity*, 14 (ed. M. Jugie, *Homélies Mariales byzantines*, PO 19.3 (Paris 1925) 33 f). The oracle is also attested by Malalas 4.8 (ed. I. Thurn, p. 55), and Joh. Ant. *FHG* 4.548. See Beatrice (2001) xxii–xxiii.

²⁸ Matthaïou & Papadopoulos (2003) 61–65, no. 31, *IG* 12/6 1265, *BE* (2004) no. 520, *SEG* 53 (2003) 904.

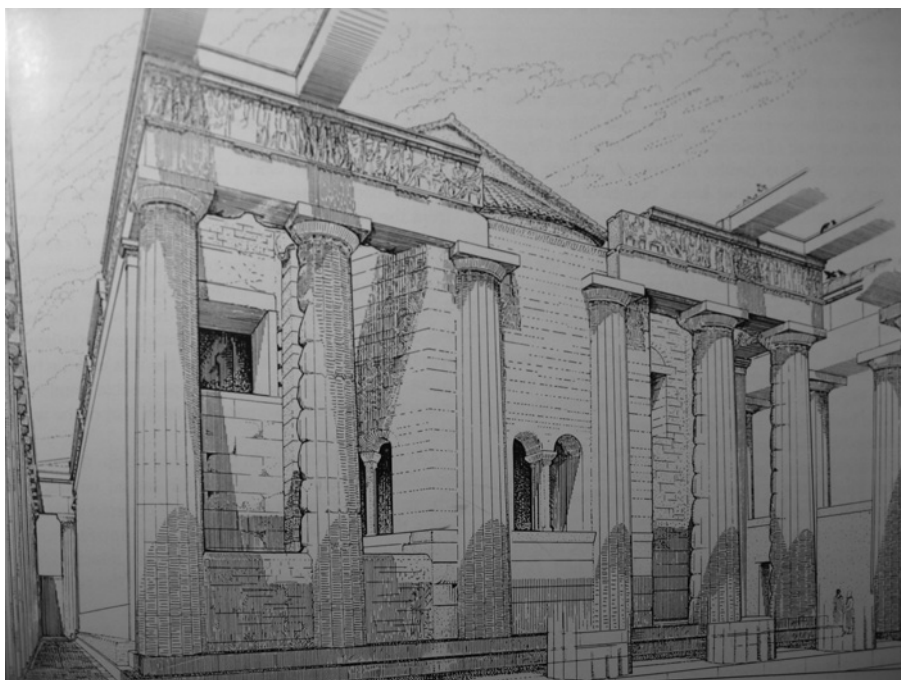


Fig. 1 The apse of the Christian Parthenon and the raised roof with the uncovered colonnade. Drawing by M. Korres (Korres (1996) p. 147, fig. 13).

temple (fig. 1).²⁹ In order to reorientate the church to the east, the entrance to the sanctuary was moved to the west, and the entrance of the pagan temple on the east was closed and replaced by the apse of the church; the *exonarthex* of the church was placed in the west porch, which was closed by low walls. Low walls closed the space between the exterior columns of the building, which were not covered, thus creating an open space between the exterior colonnade and the walls of the church. The aesthetic impact made by the appearance of the new complex was very different from that made by the original pagan temple. The treasury of the Parthenon became the *narthex* with three aisles; a *gynaikonites* was created with a wooden floor; and a baptistery was added in the north-west corner of the church. For the *synthronon* of the apse, seats from the theatre of Dionysus were used; the altar was

²⁹ For the conversion of the Parthenon see Soteriou (1927) 34–42; Deichmann (1938–39); Korres (1983) 138–39; Korres (1985); Korres (1996) 146–48.

covered with a *kiborion* with porphyry pillars; and the sanctuary was separated from the nave with a low wall of marble panels between columns. Various sculptural parts of this early church have survived, including an ambo made of marble pieces from ancient dedicatory monuments.³⁰

It is surprising that despite its conversion, the pagan temple and its sculptural decoration were maintained: the sculptures on the east and west pediments depicting the contest between the goddess and Poseidon and her birth were preserved; so was the Panathenaic frieze, with the exception of the parts where windows were opened. Only the metopes on the east, north and west sides were defaced, and although the date this damage occurred is not recorded in the sources, the violence of it, which now can be closely observed in the new Acropolis Museum, suggests that this might have been the work of early Christians. The last metope to the west of the north side remained intact, perhaps because it was considered to depict the Annunciation of the Virgin and an angel.³¹ In the words of B. Ward-Perkins:

As far as I am aware, these pediment-sculptures are a unique instance in the whole area of the empire of a pagan sculptural cycle surviving intact and *in situ* on the front of a temple into modern times—and this was on a temple converted into a church! An ancient Greek, transported forward in time, who visited the cathedral of medieval Athens, would have had no difficulty recognising it as the Temple of Athena.³²

The goddess Athene was so intimately connected with the city, its history and cultural tradition, that “...Athens never changed its name, and is perhaps the one city of the ancient world to have continuously borne the name of a pagan god”.³³ The motives of the Christians in keeping the Parthenon intact while converting it into a church may have been various: it may have included an acknowledgement of the strong cultural tradition of the site and of the cultural significance of Athens; it could have been for aesthetic reasons, to maintain a renowned architectural and sculptural site; or a recognition of the importance of Athens and its symbols in the *paideia* of Christians and pagans alike in Late Antiquity.³⁴

³⁰ Sklavou-Mauroeide (1999) 63 (no. 74); Korres (1987).

³¹ Rodenwaldt (1933).

³² Ward-Perkins (1999) 236.

³³ Ward-Perkins (1999) 236, n. 25.

³⁴ See now Kaldellis (2009) 40–59.

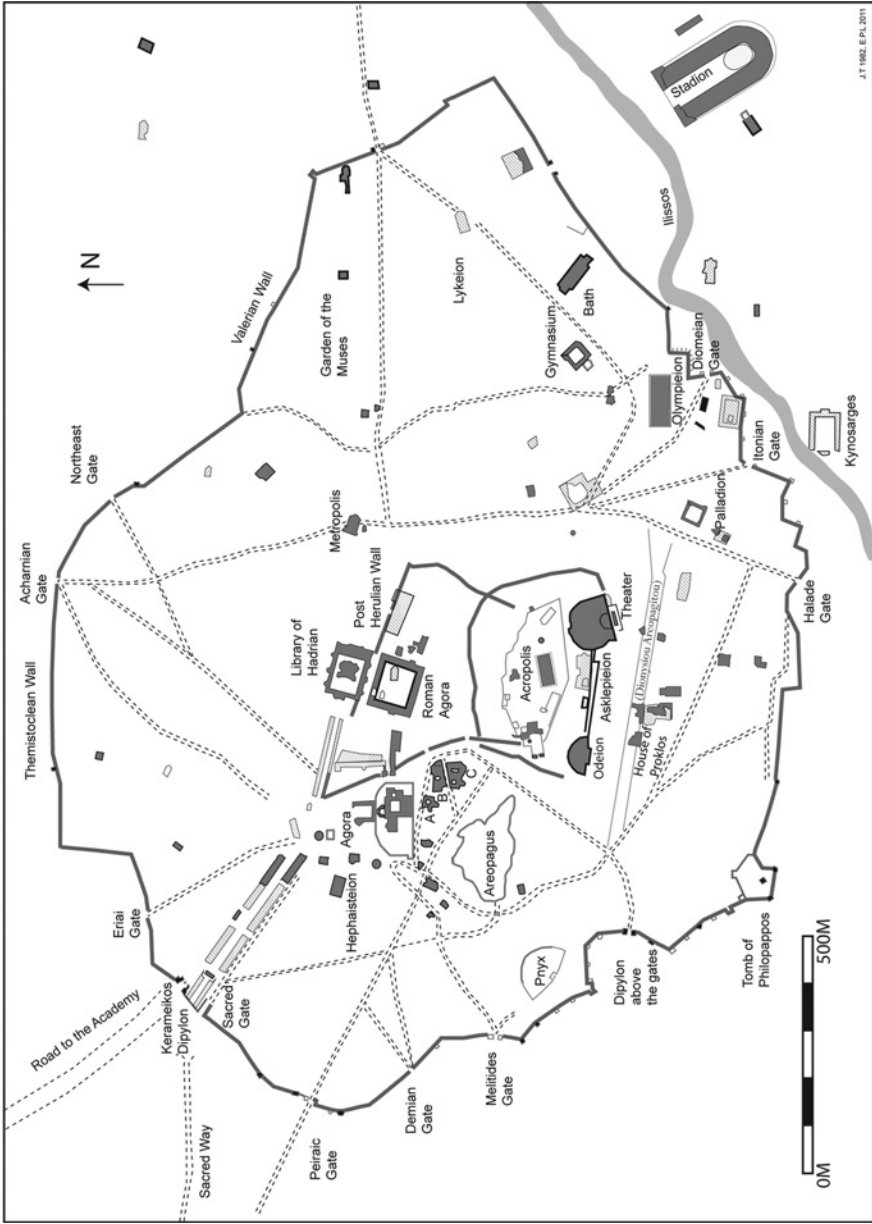


Fig. 2 Athens in the 5th c. A.D. (after A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora XXIV, Late Antiquity A.D. 267–700*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1988, plate 4).

Other Athenian Temples

The fate of other Athenian temples can be seen in the history of their reused parts in new late antique structures. By *ca.* A.D. 500, the ancient centre of Athens had been fully Christianised, with churches being established in major pagan temples and secular building. On the Acropolis, apart from the Parthenon, the Erechtheion was converted into a church towards the end of the 6th c. or early in the 7th, and the south wing of the Propylaia became a small, single-aisled church.

Significant changes occurred at the court of the Library of Hadrian to the north of the Roman agora. The function of this complex in Late Antiquity has been disputed. Some suggest that it remained an imperial forum and a library, while others propose that it was dedicated to the imperial cult or set to some new use. According to an inscription, the Prefect of Illyricum Herculius (408–10) repaired the Library of Hadrian, which had been severely damaged by the Heruli. The inscription records the erection of a statue of the Prefect by the sophist Plutarch.³⁵ It has been suggested that the Prefect gave the covered parts of the Library to the Neoplatonist philosophers and the open court to the Christians. The Tetraconch built in the middle of the peristyle court, where an ornamental pool once stood, has been linked to the restoration by Herculius and to the empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II, in the second quarter of the 5th c. (fig. 3).³⁶ This is the first Christian church inside the walled city and stands in the very heart of the pagan centre. It became the new urban focus in the middle of the 5th c., when long porticoes were built flanking the new road leading from the ancient Agora to the Tetraconch.

The Hephaisteion, or so-called ‘Theseion’, remained intact during the invasion of the Heruli and was probably converted to a church in the late 6th or early in the 7th c. At some stage the Christians destroyed some of its sculptures. The church, single-aisle in plan, is later attested as being dedicated to St. George and continued to function until 1835, when archaeologists intervened to restore it to its ancient form, when the apse was also demolished.³⁷

³⁵ *IG* 2/3² 4224; Sironen (1994) 50–51; Sironen (1997) 81–82 (no. 22).

³⁶ Frantz (1969); Karivieri (1994a) 111–13; Karivieri (1995) 899–900.

³⁷ Orlandos (1936) 207–16; Dinsmoor (1941) 6–15; Frantz (1965) 202–204; Spieser (1976) 310–11.



Fig. 3 The Tetraconch (photo by the author).

The Asklepieion is mentioned by one late antique source. The *Life of Proclus* gives an account of a miracle by Marinus that took place here. Proclus succeeded in healing Asclepigeneia, the daughter of Archiadas, by means of prayer in the Temple of Asclepius in Athens. Marinus relates how Proclus performed the miracle, which escaped the attention of most people, and so depriving his enemies of any grounds for plotting against him. At the beginning of his account, Marinus states that the Temple of Asclepius was still ‘unconquered’ (ἀπόρθητον τὸ τοῦ σωτήρος ἱερόν), which refers either to the conversion of the temple into a church or merely to the removal of its cult statue. One year after Proclus’ death (485), when Marinus was writing, the statue had apparently been taken away by Christians.³⁸ Although the excavations of 1876 destroyed most of the architectural evidence for the date of the

³⁸ Marinus *Vita Procli* 29.

construction of the Christian church, from the surviving sculptural decoration it is surmised that the conversion took place in the last decades of the 5th c. This process involved the pagan temple being demolished and a large Christian basilica being built on the site with stones from the temple. It contained two courtyards, a fountain and a baptistery on the site of the pagan fountain; the long Doric stoa to the north of the temple, the *abaton*, where the *enkoimesis* and the miraculous healing of the sick worshippers took place in the past, was now partly included in the church. The remaining half to the north toward the rock of the Acropolis became a long annex, through which the fountain was accessed. Other rooms were arranged by the *ailthron*. In spite of the transference of the cult of the healing pagan god to Christ the Saviour (*Soter*), there is evidence of Christian hostility in the defaced votive *stelai*.³⁹

At the foot of the Acropolis too, a church was established at the eastern *parodos* of the Theatre of Dionysus, and in the Tower of the Winds (the baptistery, perhaps of a nearby basilica in the Agoranomeion). Further away, the small Ionian Temple of Artemis Agrotera on the left bank of the river Ilissos was converted into a church (the *Panagia stin Petra*) possibly in the 7th c. The church, now destroyed, is depicted in an engraving of 1751–53 by J. Stuart and N. Revett (fig. 4).

Cult in Private: Upper Class Houses

Substantial evidence for late pagan cult is found in the late antique houses of Athens. The most famous are the so-called Houses of the Areopagus and the House Chi, identified as the House of Proclus, all lying around the Acropolis of Athens. They may have belonged to Neoplatonist philosophers, who lived and taught there. The Houses of the Areopagus are located south of the agora and behind the Palace of the Giants, built on terraces on the lower slopes of the Areopagus to the west. The House of Proclus is located on the south side of the Acropolis between the Odeion of Herodes Atticus and the Theatre of Dionysus. Today the house is covered by the Dionysios Areopagites Street, commemorating the first bishop of Athens and martyr under Domitian; only the house's central part, displaying an impressive apsidal hall, has been uncovered, whilst the rest still lies under the modern buildings of the area.⁴⁰ Eunapius, in the *Lives of Sophists*, describes the house of

³⁹ Xyngopoulos (1915); Travlos (1939–41); Frantz (1965); Gregory (1986) 237–39; Karivieri (1995).

⁴⁰ Frantz (1988) 37–48, 84–90.

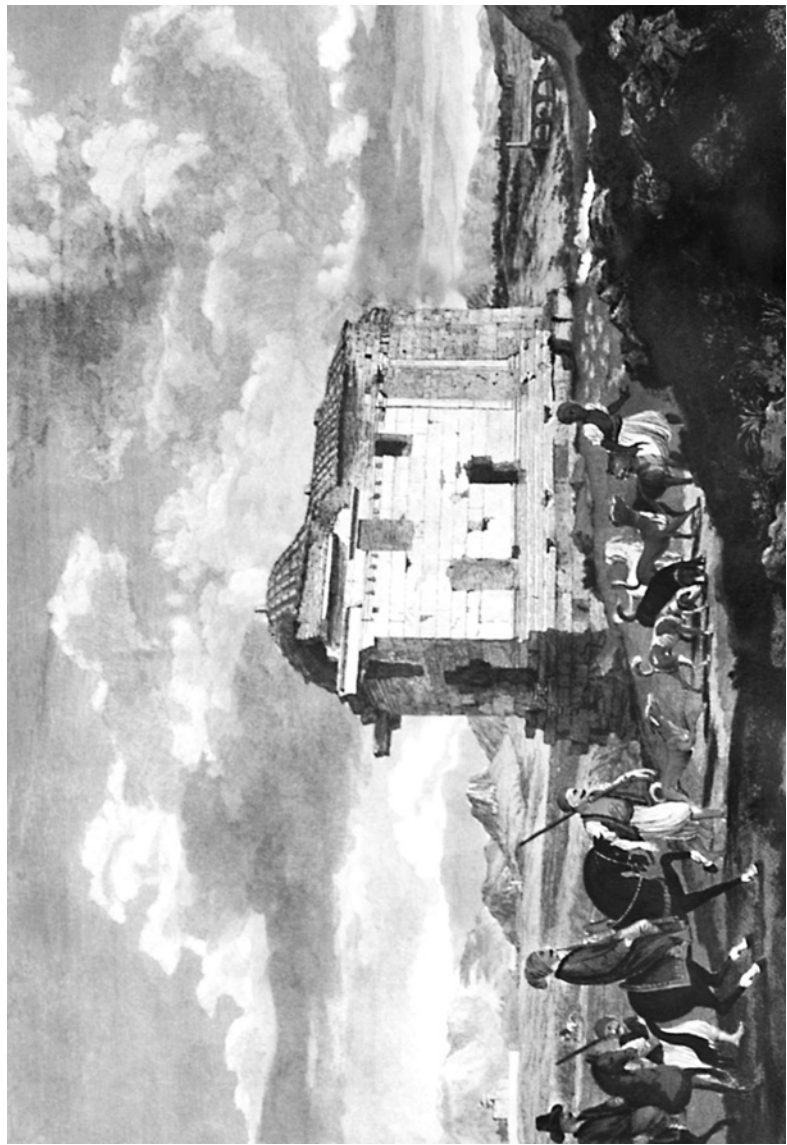


Fig. 4 The *Panagia sm Petra* depicted in an engraving of 1751–53 by J. Stuart and N. Revett.

the sophist Julian and emphasises its religious atmosphere: 'it was if it were breathing the spirit of Hermes and the Muses and resembled a shrine' (Ἑρμοῦ δὲ ὅμως καὶ Μουσῶν περιπνεύσαν, οὕτως ἱεροῦ τινοῦ ἁγίου διέφερεν οὐδέν).⁴¹

According to the *Life of Proclus*, Proclus lived, taught and performed his religious duties in a house on the southern slope of the Areopagus that belonged previously to his 'spiritual father', Syrianus, and to his 'forefather', Plutarch.⁴² The House of Proclus is an impressive late antique house with an apsidal room with seven niches, obviously a triclinium. A small shrine of Cybele was found attached to the outside of the east wall of this room. The interest that Proclus had in Cybele is well-known: he prayed to her and ritually purified himself every month.⁴³ On the west wall of this small room/shrine were two reused votive reliefs, one representing Cybele, in a *naiskos*, and the other depicting a votive scene, possibly an offering to Asclepius. The religious furnishings of this shrine reveal the circumstances in which the late pagans in Athens worshipped their gods. Both the statue of the goddess in a niche and the offering table were reused, the latter being a statue base decorated with a funerary relief of the 4th c. B.C. on the one side; evidently the worshippers in the house could not provide an appropriate offering table for their religious needs.

Perhaps to the same context belongs a bust of Isis found nearby, which was probably taken from her Hadrianic temple standing by the Asklepieion. Possibly damaged in 267, the bust was cut in half and taken to Proclus' House. L. E. Baumer suggests that the two votive reliefs provide an additional argument for the identification of this house as the House of Proclus: allegedly, Proclus was making offerings to these reliefs for the souls of the philosophers, as described by Marinus.⁴⁴ The last room to the west of the house provided evidence of sacrifice, in the form of a grave of a young piglet with offerings, seven ceramic cups, one jug, and a 5th c. lamp decorated with a representation of a running Eros (fig. 5). Most impressive is the sacrificial knife found in the neck of the animal. The lamp was apparently not burnt in the sacrificial rite, for it was found unused. A comparison with the offerings to Demeter at Eleusis, where a pig was pushed into

⁴¹ Eunap. *VS* (ed. G. Giangrande (Rome 1956)) 9.1.4.

⁴² Marinus *Vita Procli* 12.29.

⁴³ Marinus *Vita Procli* 19, 33.

⁴⁴ Marinus *Vita Procli* 36; Baumer (2001).



Fig. 5 Evidence of sacrifice in House Chi (House of Proclus): the grave of the piglet with the votive offerings and the sacrificial knife (Neg. ΝΑΦ 92, Ανασκαφή νοτίας Ακροπόλεως 1955).

a crevice of the earth to die, or was killed in a sacrifice, showed that in the House of Proclus the two rituals were combined: the pig was stabbed with the knife, the blood left to flow as an offering to the gods and the animal buried, without being slain, together with the offerings. It may be that the owners of the house performed the Eleusinian ritual at home, at a time when the Eleusis centre had been destroyed. Noticeably, the number of cups found in the grave corresponds to the seven niches of the apsidal triclinium, indicating that the participants in the banquet performed the ritual sacrifice.⁴⁵

Of the houses of the Areopagus, House C is the most noteworthy. It features a triclinium, which opens onto the atrium, a fountain house, a semi-circular nymphaeum, wells and a cistern in the main atrium. P. Athanassiadi has suggested that it was the ancestral residence of Theagenes and Hegias or some other upper-class Athenian, who offered it to the last teacher of philosophy, Damascius, to reside in and to use for his teaching. Damascius assumed the *diadoche* of the Academy *ca.* 515, and it has been postulated that his successful revival of the Academy brought about the severe decree of Justinian that was intended to close it.⁴⁶ House C had a substantial collection of statues, most of which were found intact in two of the wells of the house, which had been very carefully sealed. The statues are typical of those found in collections of rich Roman houses, consisting of portrait busts, including an imperial portrait (Antoninus Pius), and statues of divinities, a small statue of Heracles, and the heads of Helios and Nike. Nearby was found a small statue of Asclepius.

From the adjacent House B a small statue of Hermes and a head of Nemesis were discovered. Archaeological evidence dates the deposit to *ca.* 529/30—the year of the closing of the Academy of Athens. After the philosophers left, perhaps waiting for a better time to return, the house was apparently taken over by Christians, who deliberately attacked the pagan statues, which were still in their original position. In the peristyle court, a decapitated classical statue of Athene was found face down and reused as a doorstep, whilst the figures on a 4th c. B.C. votive relief (Hermes presenting the infant Dionysus to the Nymphs) were defaced. The Christians who took over the house emphasised their religious presence by means of a mosaic in a cruciform pattern

⁴⁵ Meliadis (1960); Frantz (1988) 42–44; Dontas (1954–55); Karivieri (1994a).

⁴⁶ Athanassiadi (1992) 44–45.

set in the middle of the earlier mosaic of the triclinium. It has been suggested that House C later became the Bishop's Palace, since the pool was converted into a baptistery and the large room west of the triclinium may have become a *katechoumenion*, with benches along the east and west walls; the finds include a *sigma* table and 6th c. lamps.⁴⁷ As more late antique houses come to light around the Acropolis of Athens, new evidence gives rise to speculation about their identification as houses of philosophers: one of the houses excavated in the same area during work done for the Acropolis metro station, contained, among other statuary, a head of Plato and a seated philosopher.⁴⁸

Furthermore, in a Late Roman villa in the very centre of the modern city of Athens, in the National Garden behind the Parliament building, pagan statues and reliefs have been found in the levels dating to Late Antiquity.⁴⁹ The house, built in the 2nd c. A.D., was destroyed in the mid 3rd c. Probably in the early 4th c. it was rebuilt, acquiring an apsidal room (3.50 m × 4.50 m) at the west end, which has been interpreted as a shrine. The apse was turned to the east and its opening closed with a stylobate with three small columns. In the niches of the apse stood statues, of which three were found fallen on the floor, one depicting a seated Cybele, 0.50 m in height, the second, now headless, that too depicting Cybele, another a statue of Hygeia, and two votive sculptures of Asclepius and Cybele. The size of the room in front of the apse was 4.50 m × 4.0 m. The house was destroyed at the end of the 4th c. or early in the 5th c., and a new house constructed over it, during which phase, the apsidal shrine was abandoned. As Karivieri suggests: "although we have evidence of sacrifices only from Building Chi [House of Proclus], it is likely that the religious aspect of these works of art in the other houses was not forgotten".⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Frantz (1988) 38–42, 87–90; Athanassiadi (1992) 43–47.

⁴⁸ Parlama and Stampolidis (2000) 34–37, 71, 88–91; Stirling (2005) 203–204.

⁴⁹ Spathari and Chatzioti (1983) [1989] 25.

⁵⁰ Karivieri (1994a) 138. On whether the statues found in rich houses were connected to worship, or were decorative or given an allegorical interpretation, see Stirling (2005) 22–28 and *passim*, and for a useful discussion of the archaeological evidence from these houses, 199–210. Other houses with pagan statues representing divinities worshipped in private until late in the 4th c., as, for example, in the large *domus* in the Panayia Field at Corinth: Sanders (2005) 424.

Eleusis, an International Pilgrimage Site

The international pilgrimage site at Athens was not the Parthenon, but Eleusis.⁵¹ Eleusis flourished under the empire thanks to the generosity of Roman emperors and officials who were initiated in the mysteries. The emperors Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius were among the most renowned initiates. Hadrian undertook a large restoration programme of the religious site, notably the Small and the Great Propylaia, the triumphal apses of which copied the Arch of Hadrian in Athens and the Propylaia of the Acropolis.⁵² In the external courtyard, there was the Temple of Propylaia Artemis and an altar, while two small temples—dedicated perhaps to Sabina, the wife of Hadrian, and to Faustina, wife of Antoninus Pius—stood nearby. A new *bouleuterion* was also built, as was an aqueduct and a bridge over the river Kefissos.

Eleusis suffered destruction on a major scale in A.D. 179 at the hands of invading barbarians from northern Dacia, and again in 395, at the hands of Alaric and the Visigoths. After the first destruction, Eleusis was restored on a grand scale by several Roman emperors. Inscriptions at Eleusis end in the late 3rd c.⁵³ In the 4th c., there are several references to the pagan site, which become more frequent during the reign of Julian. In 326, the Platonist Nicagoras, *dadouchos* of the Eleusinian Mysteries, tied the Eleusinian Mysteries closely to the philosophers of the Academy.⁵⁴ This intimate link might have been the result of a personal initiative or a consequence of an ideological trend of the time. Thus in the mid 4th c. it was the Neoplatonist teachers, Maximus and Chrysanthius, who encouraged Julian to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries.⁵⁵ Before he set off to fight Constantius, Julian summoned the Eleusinian hierophant and together they performed some rites known only to them. After he subdued Constantius, Julian sent the hierophant off to Greece, as if the latter had been a god, with presents and all that he might need, including support for maintaining the temples of Greece.⁵⁶ Eleusis was elevated to a major spiritual and religious power.

⁵¹ Fowden (1986) 47–48.

⁵² Giraud (1991) 272–76; Clinton (1989a); Clinton (1989b).

⁵³ Clinton (2005).

⁵⁴ Nicagoras: *CIG* 3.4770. See Fowden (1987); Bassett (2004) 43.

⁵⁵ Eunap. *VS* 8.2.13–3.1; Athanassiadi (1992) 48–49; for those initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries in Late Antiquity see Chuvin (1990) 218, 220–21.

⁵⁶ Eunap. *VS* 7.3.9.

Another famous pagan initiate was the Roman senator Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, with his wife Paulina. Praetextatus held various high offices of state, including the proconsulship of Achaea (at the end of 361 or in early 362) and the prefecture of Rome (367). He and his wife were initiated into several cults, thereby following a trend among the members of the upper class of the time: Praetextatus participated in the cult of Magna Mater (*tauroboliatus*), Mithras and Hecate, and was initiated into the mysteries of Dionysus and the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Kore (*sacratu Libero et Eleusiniis*) and also participated in the mysteries of Isis and Sarapis (*neocorus*); Paulina was initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries of Iacchos, Demeter and Kore (*apud Eleusinam*) and the mysteries of Liber, Demeter and Kore at Lerna in Argolis (*apud Laernam*), and into the cult of Hecate in Aegina (*sacrata apud Eginam Hecatae; hierophantia*), Magna Mater (*tauroboliata*) and Isis.⁵⁷ The attraction that Roman aristocrats and intellectuals felt for the mystery cults in this period is best explained in the funerary poem of Praetextatus and Paulina, where it is stated that the initiate would overcome the threat of death, expecting a better status in the life after death,⁵⁸ and in the poem of Claudian (*ca.* 370–*ca.* 404), *De raptu Proserpinae*, which may describe initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries.⁵⁹ In 364, the Christian emperors Valentinian and Valens prohibited nocturnal sacrifices, and Praetextatus, then proconsul of Greece, having such profound bonds with the mysteries, appealed to Valentinian, thereby obtaining exemption for his province of Achaea.⁶⁰

The philosopher Eunapius, in his *Vitae sophistarum*, of *ca.* 399, refers to Eleusis and its uncertain future under the Christian emperors.⁶¹ In the early 360s, the sophist Prohaeresius, teacher of Eunapius, had asked the Eleusinian hierophant to prophesise for how long the measures of Julian against the Christians would last.⁶² This hierophant is thought to have been Nestorius, one of the principal councillors of Julian in his

⁵⁷ *CIL* 6. 1778, 1779, 1780. Kahlos (2002) 62, 71ff. Inscriptions from Attica refer to Eleusinian rites in connection with members of the upper class: Sironen (1997) 66–69, 74–75, 91–92 (nos. 12, 16, 27).

⁵⁸ *Tu me, marite, disciplinarum bono / puram ac pudicam sorte mortis eximens / in templa ducis ac famulam divi dicas; / te teste cunctis imbuor mysteriis: CIL* 6. 1779.

⁵⁹ Lizzi and Consolino (1993) 932.

⁶⁰ *Cod. Theod.* 9.16.7 (A.D. 364); Zos. 4.3.2–3.

⁶¹ Eunap. *VS* 7.3.1–5.

⁶² Eunap. *VS* 10.8.1–2. Most scholars, following a statement of Jerome in *Chron.* (A.D. 363) and one of Eunapius, conclude that Prohaeresius was a Christian, who addressed the question to the pagan hierophant. See, however, Goulet (2000).

reforms.⁶³ Eunapius refers sadly to the decline of the religious centre at Eleusis in the later part of the 4th c.⁶⁴ He relates that he himself was initiated by a hierophant (ἐτέλει γὰρ τὸν ταῦτα γράφοντα), who was descended from the Eumolpidae, the hereditary priests of Eleusis. He foretold the overthrow of the temples, and prophesised that after his death the religious tradition would not be observed, since a hierophant would be consecrated to the office, not of Athenian origin, but from Thespieae, and a priest of Mithras. Clearly, ancient religious tradition was fading and pagan worshippers were unable to preserve it. He also foretold that in his lifetime the sacred temples would be razed to the ground and laid waste. Indeed, Eunapius asserts, when this last hierophant from Thespieae was consecrated many misfortunes befell the area, including the invasion of Alaric.

Eleusis remained pagan until the invasion of Alaric in 396, but did not recover from this attack and the celebrations of the Eleusinian Mysteries ended.⁶⁵ Archaeological evidence indicates that in the 5th c. the Christian cult was already firmly established on the site, although it offers nothing precise regarding the time of the establishment of the Christian basilicas or the circumstances and the process of the Christianisation of the site. In the final years of pagan Eleusis, Bishop Asterius of Amaseia (A.D. 380–90) attacked the cult in his *Encomium on All the Martyrs*. Asterius makes a passing reference to the rites that took place at Eleusis, which generated much discussion among scholars of ancient religion.⁶⁶ He complains that the *demos* of Athens and, indeed, of the whole of Greece gathered to celebrate this cult (δῆμος Ἀττικὸς καὶ ἡ Ἑλλάς πᾶσα συρρεῖ ἵνα τελέσῃ ματαιότητα). He refers to the *katabasion* and to the solemn meeting of the hierophant and the priestess (αἱ σεμναὶ τοῦ ἱεροφάντου πρὸς τὴν ἱέρειαν συντυχία, μόνου πρὸς μόνην); then, he states, the torches are extinguished and the worshippers believe that their salvation (τὴν σωτηρίαν) depends

⁶³ Eunap. *VS* 7.3.7–9; Zos. 4.18.2–4. See Banchich (1998); Kaldellis (2005).

⁶⁴ Eunap. *VS* 7.3.1–5 (καὶ οὐτός γε ἦν ὁ καὶ τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν καταστροφὴν καὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀπώλειαν ἀπάσης προγνούς, τοῦ συγγραφέως παρόντος... καὶ (εἰς τοσόνδε προνοίας ἐξικνεῖτο) ἐφ' ἐαυτῷ τε τὰ ἱερὰ κατασκαφῆσεσθαι καὶ δηωθῆσεσθαι ἔφασκεν, κάκεινον ζῶντα ταῦτα ἐπόψεσθαι, διὰ φιλοτιμίαν περιττὴν ἀτιμαζόμενον, καὶ προτελευτήσιν γε αὐτοῦ τὴν θεραπείαν ταῖν θεαῖν, τὸν δὲ τῆς τιμῆς ἀποστερηθέντα, μήτε τὸν ἱεροφάντην μήτε τὸν γηραιὸν βίον ἔχειν).

⁶⁵ Invasion of Alaric: Procl. *In Ti.* (ed. E. Diehl) 3. 176.

⁶⁶ Datema (1970) X.9.1 (p. 140). Datema (1970) xxiii dates this homily before A.D. 395 on account of the reference to the Eleusinian mysteries. On the attacks of Christian Fathers against the Eleusinian mysteries see Mylonas (1961) 287–316.

on what is taking place by the two who perform their actions in the darkness. The passage has been interpreted by some scholars as implying that the hierophant and the priestess enacted a Sacred Marriage; others have thought that Asterius chose an easy means of discrediting the Eleusinian Mysteries to his flock, by implicitly accusing them of immorality. Either way, it is clear that at the time Asterius was writing, the rites at Eleusis persisted.

By the end of the 5th c., the sanctuary had been completely demolished, apparently by Christians. Not only were the stones and sculptures of the pagan monuments reused in new constructions, but many crosses and other Christian symbols were inscribed on pagan sculptures and stones to purify them and incorporate them in new Christian buildings. In the words of G. Mylonas:

...crosses, scratched especially upon the marble pavement of the Greater Propylaea, mark this transformation of the 'temenos of the world' into a wasteland and serve as the funeral symbols of a glorious cult which served humanity for almost two thousand years and which was buried under its own debris when a new hope and a new religion came into being in the Hellenic and Hellenised world.⁶⁷

Three Christian basilicas were constructed.⁶⁸ Under the small post-Byzantine church of St. Zachariah are preserved remains of an Early Christian basilica dating to the 5th c.; it has three aisles, an interior and an exterior narthex, and a baptistery with a cruciform pool; the column and bases were taken from other buildings of the site. In 1859, in the church's foundations, the great Eleusinian sculpture with Triptolemos, Demeter and Kore was found. Perhaps the Early Christian basilica was built on the Temple of Triptolemos containing the threshing floor and an altar. In the Early Christian period, the west cemetery, in use since Hellenistic times, was abandoned. The Christians subsequently used the sanctuary to bury their dead: several tombs are located against the 4th c. defensive wall; they were constructed in brick and contained vases.⁶⁹ A Christian presence is also attested by clay lamps decorated with crosses and in inscriptions.

In the agora of Athens, the so-called City Eleusinion was part of the Eleusinian celebrations. There the priestess of Demeter was lead,

⁶⁷ Mylonas (1961) 8–9.

⁶⁸ Lenormant (1862); Soteriou (1929) 183–84.

⁶⁹ Mylonas (1961) 186.

escorted by *ephebes*, while the sacred objects were carried in baskets. The sacred objects were kept there during the first five days of the festival and were later returned in procession of new initiands to Eleusis. The City Eleusinion was one of the most venerated sites of central Athens and immediately next to it was built the post-Herulian wall. Several inscriptions record the cult, namely a dedication to a hierophant and a genealogical table dating to the early 4th c. listing the offices of *hierokeryx*, *dadouchos*, hierophant, priest, held by family members.⁷⁰

Phlya and the Taurobolium

From Halandri, a suburb to the north-east of central Athens, come three altars made of Pentelic marble and comparable in size and sculptural decoration.⁷¹ The discovery of these altars, so similar to each other, suggests the existence of a workshop for the production of pagan sculpture in Athens in the later part of the 4th c.⁷² On the altars are represented Rhea-Cybele and Demeter (or Kore) seated on a low throne. This central scene is complemented by representations of Hecate, a male god (possibly Hermes or Bacchus), Attis, a lion, pine-trees, and the symbols of the goddess. On the one side of the two altars, now in the National Museum of Athens, are dedicatory inscriptions, one (no. 1747) is a dedication by a certain Musonius and the other (no. 1746) by Archelaus.⁷³ The inscription of Musonius refers to the *hypateia* of Honorius and Euodius, when the *archon* was Hermogenes, six days before the calends (*kalendai*) of June, that is, May 27, A.D. 387. The other inscription of Archelaus has been dated on stylistic grounds to the 360s.

Both inscriptions commemorate the initiation into the cult of Cybele with the *taurobolium* at Phlya. The cult is mentioned by ancient authors, such as Hippolytus in his *Kata pason aireseon elenghos*, who refers to *orgia*

⁷⁰ IG 2/2 3674, 2342 = *Agora* 31; Miles (1998) 1.79, 80 (p. 209). See also Sironen (1994) 33–34 (no. 17), 26–30, 54–55 (nos. 11, 13) related to Eleusis.

⁷¹ Two of them have the same dimensions (0.36 × 0.45 × 0.37; 0.36 × 0.40 × 0.36) and are now in the National Museum of Athens (nos. 1746, 1747). The third, almost double the size of the other two, was found in 1837 incorporated in the wall of a local church and later used as a *prothesis* in the contemporary church of St. George in Halandri. See Vermaseren (1982) 116–18, nos. 389, 390; Loukas (1986); Loukas (1988).

⁷² Loukas (1986) 32; Fowden (1988) 56, n. 55.

⁷³ IG 2² 4841, 4842; Sironen (1997) 92–95 (no. 28), 95–96 (no. 29).

of the so-called Great (Mother) at Phlya, which are older than the Eleusinian Mysteries.⁷⁴ He also mentions the *pastas*, a bridal room in the sanctuary, where the mystery rites were performed and depicted in paintings.⁷⁵ Pausanias tells us that at Phlya the Great Goddess was the Earth.⁷⁶ In the Roman period, Cybele was worshipped there together with the goddess Demeter. In the last phase of this cult, in the 4th c., aristocrats were particularly attracted to the *taurobolium*, because it had become fashionable and the Great Mother had been recognised as a protector of the Roman state. Thus the public performance of the rite gave aristocrats visibility and prestige. The first major Christian Latin poet, Prudentius (died *ca.* 405–13), in his *Peristephanon* (which praises individual western martyrs), gives a detailed description of a bloody rite, the accuracy of which has been questioned, however. At the same time some have seen in the later development of the Cybele cult the influence of Christian rites. The myth of Cybele and Attis was interpreted allegorically by Neoplatonist philosophers who considered Attis a solar god and Cybele a cosmic power, as, does, for example, Julian in his hymn to the Great Mother and Macrobius in his *Saturnalia*.⁷⁷

Every *taurobolium* involved the dedication of an altar by the blood or *vires* of the bull. The inscription of Musonius records that the *taurobolium* was performed in Athens, and that Musonius, the *lamprotatos* (*clarissimus*), having received the password (or the symbol) of the rite, dedicated the altar. This is one of the latest inscriptions from the whole empire to record the *taurobolium*. The inscription of Archelaus states that he was Athenian in origin, but resident at Argos, where he had been initiated into the local cults; he dedicated the altar to Attis and Rhea in return for his initiation into the *taurobolium* rite. At Argos he lived a life ‘connected with mysteries’ (*βίοτον μυστικόν*): he was guardian (*kleidouchos*) of the Temple of Hera and received the torches of the mystic rite; he was *dadouchos* of the Kore and dedicated an altar to Rhea; he had researched the secret signs of the rite of the *taurobolium*, which had been performed there for the first time. Thus, Phlya’s altars are very important for the history of late paganism in Greece: they reveal the attachment of upper class pagans to the cult of Cybele, like

⁷⁴ Hippol. *Haer.* 5.20.

⁷⁵ On the identification of the depicted figures and on the inscriptions of the *pastas* see Loukas (1988) 198–207.

⁷⁶ Paus. 1.31.4.

⁷⁷ Duthoy (1969); Vermaseren (1977); McLynn (1996).

the Roman aristocrats in Italy; they also show that influential aristocrats of various Greek cities were interconnected through this mystery rite.⁷⁸

PEAK SANCTUARIES AND CAVES OF ATTICA

Cults at various rural sites, on mountains and in caves, appear to have been revived all over Attica in Late Antiquity. Thus the cult at the shrine of Zeus Ombrios (Zeus the Showery) on the summit of Mount Hymettus, which had faded by the 6th c. B.C., reappeared in the 4th and 5th c. A.D., as lamps and coin finds indicate. The cult could have revived because Attica was increasingly reliant on its own grain, since the needs of the *annona* of Constantinople may have deprived the district of imports, and so a cult that encouraged rain may have increased in popularity.⁷⁹ Another cult site on the hill behind Varkiza near Athens, which by the 4th c. B.C. had almost completely fallen out of use, was revived in the 5th and 6th c. A.D.⁸⁰ Yet another, on the hill of Kiapha-Thiti, abandoned in the Hellenistic period, re-emerged in the middle and later imperial period, gaining a church on the site in the 5th to 6th centuries.⁸¹

The famous Cave of Vari, close to the ancient deme of Anagyrus in Attica, on the southern tip of Hymettus, has yielded evidence of late pagan cult activity. The cave, dedicated to Pan, the Nymphs and Apollo, fell out of use in the 2nd c. B.C., but was revived in the 4th c. A.D. Next to the entrance of the grotto is a seated statue of Cybele in a niche: the statue was hewn from the rock, while the missing head was probably made of marble. The discovery of the head of a lion in another part of the cave suggests that the depicted goddess is Cybele.⁸² Coins recovered date from Constantine to Arcadius. About 1,000 lamps were also found on the site, a number of which bear Christian symbols. The excavators thought that in the 4th c. the Cave of Vari was taken over by Christians, who smashed the pagan sculptures and employed the cave for their own cult. But the Christian lamps may not necessarily indicate that the worshippers were Christians, since pagans might use Christian lamps, if lamps with Christian imagery were the

⁷⁸ Piérart (1997); Loukas (1988) 110–35.

⁷⁹ Langdon (1976) 7–8, 73–74, 76, 94–95; Fowden (1988) 55.

⁸⁰ Lauter and Lauter-Bufe (1986) 285–309.

⁸¹ Fowden (1988) 56.

⁸² Vermaseren (1982) 115, no. 388.

only ones available to them, or were fashionable. The pagan cult images in the cave have been destroyed, but this could have happened at the end of the cave's period of use, rather than in the 4th c. As such, it may indeed be the case that a late pagan cult was practised here.⁸³

More famous, however, is the Cave of Pan on Parnes, east of the fortress of Phyle and situated on a steep gorge.⁸⁴ Over 2,000 lamps have been found here. One inscription of particular interest is written in verse and mentions the visit to the cave by a certain Nicagoras, perhaps son or grandson of the *dadouchos* Nicagoras. Nicagoras records his difficult ascent (χαλεπήν μετ' ἀναιβασίην) to the cave for the eleventh or the twelfth time.⁸⁵ The vocabulary expresses the gratitude of the worshipper to the god and his profound piety and an intimate tone towards the deity, called 'Pan, dear to him' (φίλε μοι Πάν). Neoplatonists are known to have taken a particular interest in, and enjoyed affinity with, the cult of Pan.⁸⁶ At some unknown point in time, the objects of the cave were smashed, the classical sculptures broken or defaced, and the site completely abandoned.

Corinth

1. The Asklepieion: Continuity of Pagan Cult on Temple Ruins

The Asklepieion of Corinth was a large temple and, like all the other temples of Corinth, was completely dismantled after its destruction, possibly at the hands of Alaric, but, in the view of the excavators, mainly by Christians.⁸⁷ The stones of the temple and its appendages were removed and mostly reworked on the site, as large amounts of stone chips indicate. After the temple was demolished, numerous Christian tombs were created in the courtyard and in the areas north and east of the temple. The area of the temple itself and slightly beyond its foundations, however, was left undisturbed. By *ca.* A.D. 450, the blocks of the temple and its sculptures had all been removed or burnt for lime. More than 700 coins were found, most from the fill of the temple, showing that the area received many visitors, and they may well indicate trade activities connected with the dismantled pieces and

⁸³ Weller et al. (1903); Wickens (1986) 2. 90–121; Fowden (1988) 56.

⁸⁴ Skias (1918); Wickens (1986) 2. 245–69.

⁸⁵ *IG* 2–3² 4831; Sironen (1997) 91–92 (no. 27).

⁸⁶ Marinus *Vita Procli* 33; Fowden (1988) 57.

⁸⁷ Roebuck (1951) 160–61.

lime production. Directly in front of the temple a cement pavement was uncovered, dated, by coins found underneath it, to sometime after the mid 4th c. Bonded to this pavement was a marble column shaft, which served as support for a marble slab, perhaps, as Rothaus has suggested, the main altar after the principal one was destroyed together with the temple.

In this case, the pagan cult continued even after the destruction of the Asklepieion.⁸⁸ Numerous lamps, dating to the late 4th and 5th centuries, have been recovered from the fill covering the foundations of the sanctuary and the debris of the collapsed temple; most of the lamps were intact, which implies that they were left there by worshippers as votive offerings. Lamps also found in the demolition debris of Temple E in the forum have been regarded as evidence of cult continuity by pagans.⁸⁹ Rothaus extends this interpretation to the lamps found on the destruction layer of the Aphrodision at Argos.⁹⁰ A votive pit in the fill of the courtyard of Corinth's Asklepieion contains remains of sacrifices and lamps—one decorated with a cross—dating from the 5th c. to the mid 6th. This has been interpreted as evidence of late sacrifices on the site.⁹¹ In the context of a continuous pagan cult at the Asklepieion, the Christian burials at the site are viewed by Rothaus as being intended to discourage pagans from visiting the sanctuary, by then in ruins. This view rests upon the idea of pagan disgust for corpses and their need to purify themselves after coming in contact with funerals and burials, before entering a temple.⁹²

The Fountain of the Lamps

In the area of the Gymnasium of Corinth the underground structure known as the 'Fountain of the Lamps' offers a rare example of the

⁸⁸ Rothaus (2000) 46–47.

⁸⁹ Rothaus (2000) 48–49. Sanders (2005) 430, n. 17 dates the lamps and tombs of the Asklepieion a little later than Rothaus.

⁹⁰ Daux (1969) 1009–10.

⁹¹ Rothaus (2000) 49–50. Sanders (2005) 430, n. 17 does not agree with Rothaus' interpretation that the Christian burials were meant to deter pagans from visiting their holy site.

⁹² Rothaus (2000) 50–54. A similar case has been attested at the Temple of Artemis near Patras, at Ano Mazaraki, Rakita. The temple was destroyed by earthquake and fire in the 4th c., perhaps in the year A.D. 373. In the fill of the destruction, especially at the *prostoion* and the entrance, many Late Roman finds suggest that the cult continued in the open air, probably at the altar, which unfortunately has been destroyed by the construction of the nearby road: Petropoulos (2000) B1, 224.

interaction of pagan and Christian beliefs, interspersed with a mixture of magic. The fountain provided water for the Hellenistic and Roman baths, with the natural cave and its fountain located only 200 m west of the Asklepion. This bath complex was abandoned towards the end of the 4th c., after its destruction by an earthquake in 375 or by the Visigoths in 396. From then on until the final collapse of the bath and the final abandonment of the site in the middle or in the third quarter of the 6th c., the Fountain of the Lamps was used for a cult with magical nuances. Four thousand lamps, half of them intact, and four lead tablets with *defixiones* have been found deposited there; the coins date from the mid 5th c. to the mid or late 6th c. These lamps were decorated with the figure of Eros—a very popular deity at the time—Christian crosses and figures of the Old Testament. The inscriptions on four of the lamps have generated much discussion regarding their correct reading and their content. One is inscribed ‘angels who dwell on the waters’. The cross at the beginning leaves no doubt that it was Christian. The worship of angels was condemned by the 35th Canon of the Council of Laodicaea in 363 as ‘concealed paganism’ (κεκρυμμένη εἰδωλολατρεία), which threatened with anathema those who abandon the Church and invoke the angels.⁹³ In the early 5th c., Theodoretus, bishop of Cyrrhus, mentions the *pathos* of the worship of angels in Phrygia and Pisidia.⁹⁴ The worship of angels was considered parallel to the worship of the Nymphs. Another lamp has a magical invocation (‘I invoke you by the great god Sabaoth, by Michael, by Gabriel, in order that you do...’), and another one has the Christian invocation ‘Be merciful to your servant...’ Another mentions the demons that need to be pacified (*eukataktōi*), along with a reference to γένος Θεοῦ Ἰησοῦ and the dedication of the slave of the Ὑψιστος. Four lead tablets have also been found. On one is inscribed an invocation to the Nymphs; on another there is reference to Abrasax, often invoked in magical spells and represented in the form of a serpent, symbol of the underworld.

Rothaus draws attention to a similar cult at Mamre in Palestine, as described by Sozomen.⁹⁵ There too, Jews, pagans and Christians celebrated the same festival at the same time and lamps were deposited

⁹³ *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (ed. Mansi) 2. 570.

⁹⁴ *PG* 82: 612.

⁹⁵ Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 2.4.3–6; Rothaus (2000) 132–33.

according to the pagan custom. The votive offerings in the fountain at Corinth show the interaction of Christian beliefs, pagan cults and Jewish influences with a mixture of magic.⁹⁶ The volume of lamps found at the Fountain of the Lamps in Corinth may indicate that, as at Mamre, there too a cult of people of various religious beliefs was operating.

2. *Building 7 and De-sacralisation*

A series of structures east of the ancient theatre of Corinth reveal aspects of everyday religious practice in Late Antiquity.⁹⁷ Building 7 had one of its two rooms decorated with frescoes representing Heracles, Hera, Zeus, a helmeted Athene, Aphrodite (admiring herself in the shield of Ares which she holds), and a hunting Artemis. The Aphrodite figure was lavishly ornate, parts of her body being emphasised by means of gold leaf, a rare feature. The Aphrodite who holds the shield is the type of armed Aphrodite that was worshiped in the Roman period on the Acrocorinth and represented on coins. The door connecting the two rooms is flanked with representations of Hera's peacock and Eros. There is no doubt that the cult of Aphrodite was conducted at the site, perhaps in its vulgar form, popular among those on their way to the theatre.

In the last phase of Building 7, the door connecting the two rooms was blocked and one room was used for commerce, acquiring a new door on the East Theatre Street and losing its cultic function, although the frescoes depicting the pagan gods were maintained. The building, destroyed in an earthquake, was then abandoned. The new, obviously Christian, inhabitants of the area left no signs of their religious beliefs, but did leave evidence of their hostility to paganism: in a wall along the East Theatre Street, the torso of a larger than life-size Aphrodite was found, which must have stood in the room with the frescoes of Building 7; the statue was sawn in two at the waist and hacked apart by a pick placed at the navel. It would appear that the treatment of the statue was intentionally symbolic, its purpose being to destroy it in a most humiliating manner. From the same wall was recovered a hydreia of Osiris. These were venerated, as they normally

⁹⁶ Avramea (1997) 151–54 with references; Rothaus (2000) 126–234. For the connection of lamps with *defixiones* in magic rituals in Late Antiquity by pagans and Christians see Mastrocinque (2007). For the continuity of ancient rituals in a new context see Dally (2003).

⁹⁷ Williams (2005).

contained Nile water collected when the river was flooded, for the water of Nile was the blood of Osiris and symbolised rebirth. The Osiris jar at Corinth is made of black steatite, but being solid, it could not have contained water. This too was badly damaged, being split in two and with the relief figures of the cult having been defaced with a chisel—damage which the excavator suggested was the action of Christians.

Argos

Argos occupies a prominent position in the history of late paganism in Greece, since aristocrats and intellectuals showed great interest in the cult of Hera and Lerna there. Thus in 336, Libanius went to Athens to complete his higher education, and travelled to Sparta to see the ‘Whipping Festival’, which had become an attraction, and in Lerna he was initiated into the mysteries.⁹⁸ In his oration of 362, he mentions the piety of Aristophanes and his father Menander: Menander had been initiated into the mysteries of Hecate in Aigina and of Poseidon at Isthmus, and Aristophanes likewise into the mysteries of Demeter, Kore, Sarapis, Poseidon and Dionysus at Lerna.⁹⁹ St. Cyprian, martyred during the persecution of Diocletian, was initiated into the mysteries of Hera at Argos before his conversion.¹⁰⁰ The inscription of Archelaus, mentioned earlier, shows the various cults in which he was involved, while the wife of Praetextatus, too, had been initiated into the mysteries at Lerna.¹⁰¹ The sources reveal how in the later part of the 4th c. important aristocrats revived the pagan cults of Argos and possessed religious offices in other cities too. They established a network of contacts with Roman dignitaries and intellectuals and promoted their piety in public.

It is in the context of this revived paganism that a monumental hearth, 6.50 m × 2.50 m in size, discovered in the agora of Argos is to be placed. It was enclosed by nine demarcating poles, connected by wooden sticks. A great deal of ash and coal lay in the hearth from the last fire, lit around the mid 4th c. Very few bones were found and most of them were not burnt. Obviously this was not a site for sacri-

⁹⁸ Lib. *Or.* 1 (autobiography) 23.

⁹⁹ Lib. *Or.* 14.5–7.

¹⁰⁰ *Confessio S. Cypriani* AASS Sept. 7 (1760) 222.

¹⁰¹ *CIL* 6.1780.

fices. The lamps, intact and dating to the first half or the middle of the 4th c., had not been used.¹⁰² The altar has been interpreted as the site of the last version of the sacred fire that the Argives maintained in honour of Phoroneus, mentioned by Pausanias as inside the Temple of Apollo Lykeios.¹⁰³ M. Piérart thought that this arrangement was an expression of the piety of the late Argive pagans, who found it difficult to perform public sacrifices and so invented this way of performing their rites and expressing their piety. According to this interpretation, the pagans of Argos reshaped the first cult of their city in a manner that was in accord with the theology of light and fire, that was popular in the period.¹⁰⁴

The agora of Argos ceased to function as a civic centre in the last quarter of the 4th c. The finds in a well east of Monument C are significant: when the agora was abandoned, debris from its demolished buildings was thrown into the wells; among finds suggestive of intentional destruction by Christians are mutilated heads of statues and one marble slab with a dedication to Hadrian commemorating the construction of a Temple of Hera, broken into seventeen small fragments.¹⁰⁵ As at Corinth, lead tablets with *defixiones* and numerous lamps hint of magic rituals.¹⁰⁶

Delphi and Olympia

In the major pagan centres of Delphi and Olympia, paganism had ended by the turn of the 4th c. and Christian communities began to develop. According to the Church historian Philostorgius, the Emperor Julian sent his doctor, Oribasius, to Delphi, to whom Apollo prophesied the end of his oracle.¹⁰⁷ Around the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi rich private houses were constructed and on the site of the temple, shops and workshops were installed, whilst to the east a poor neighbourhood developed. Only the adytum of the Temple of Apollo was destroyed and the Christian basilica of the 5th c. was built near the pagan sanctuary on a terrace above it, the Sacred Road becoming

¹⁰² Piérart *et al* (1987) 595–97; Treuil R. *et al* (1988) 699–700.

¹⁰³ Paus. 2.19.5.

¹⁰⁴ Piérart (1997) 156.

¹⁰⁵ Croissant *et al* (1992) 673–74.

¹⁰⁶ Ivantchik (2002).

¹⁰⁷ Gregory (1983).

a commercial street.¹⁰⁸ There has been a notable interest in the Roman and late antique periods at Olympia in the form of the continuing project '*Olympia in Roman and Late Antiquity*'. In the context of this project the meticulous notes of the first excavators will be re-examined and new excavations will be conducted. Epigraphic evidence shows that athletic competitions continued at least until the year 385.¹⁰⁹ The Christian church established in the Workshop of Pheidias dates to the mid 5th c. and Christian finds do not predate this. In the early 5th c., the famous statue of Pheidias from the sanctuary of Zeus was included in the collection of Lausus in Constantinople.¹¹⁰ All this indicates that the pagan cult ended in the late 4th to early 5th c. Pagan land was then transferred to the Church, a unique testimony to which is an inscription from Olympia recording a certain *anagnostes* of the Church in possession of land under the right of *emphyteusis* (ἐμφυντευτῆς τῆς κτήσεως [*sic*]).¹¹¹ At the turn of the 5th c., the patriarch of Antioch, Severus, emphatically stated that by then the pagan oracular centres of Dodone, Delphi, Olympia, Nemea, Epidauros, Isthmus, Daphne and Heliopolis (Baalbek), were silent and closed; the temples had been destroyed to their foundations and their idols overturned.¹¹²

PAGAN STATUARY

Cult statues from temples and sanctuaries or public buildings with an obvious cultic significance were targeted by Christians, in Greece as elsewhere. Palladas refers to such acts of destructions in humorous verses: a bronze statue of Eros was melted to become a frying pan, whilst others were disposed of in public places.¹¹³ Eusebius describes the destruction of pagan statues by Christians at the time of Constantine: they were broken into pieces, stripped of their precious material, melted down and publicly exposed to ridicule, so that it became evident to all that they were mere stone and metal.¹¹⁴ Incidents of deliberate destruction might have been more frequent than is usually believed, but the problem is that destruction of statues has not been

¹⁰⁸ Déroche (1989); Badie *et al* (1997); Badie *et al* (1998) 543–47.

¹⁰⁹ Ebert (1997) 218. For the end of the Olympic games see Weiler (2004).

¹¹⁰ Bassett (2004) 98, 99, 114, 232, 238–39.

¹¹¹ Zoumbaki (2001) 55.

¹¹² Sev. Ant. *PO* 35 (1969) 363, 365; *PO* 23 (1932) 44, 48; *PO* 36/4 (1974) 565.

¹¹³ Palladas *Anth. Graec.* 9.773, 441.

¹¹⁴ On the methods employed for the destruction of statues see Stewart (1999).

recognised or noted in archaeological reports nor it did interest the excavators; and of course, not all defaced and discarded statues date to Late Antiquity, and not all were victims of Christian attacks.¹¹⁵

In some cases statues were broken into pieces and left *in situ*, as in the gymnasium of Messene, where honorific statues and public documents dating from the Early Imperial period stood.¹¹⁶ Here, the shrine of Hermes and Heracles, whose cult statues are mentioned by Pausanias, was revealed in excavations in Room III b of the west portico of the gymnasium: the statues were found broken into numerous pieces. In the other rooms of the gymnasium were found broken statues of heroised upper-class citizens of Messene, two of them represented as Hermes.¹¹⁷ There is plenty of evidence to suggest a systematic destruction of statues by Christians in Messene: the statue of Theseus, represented as Doryphoros, on a podium at the propylon of the north-western corner of the gymnasium, was also found as fragments.¹¹⁸

At Corinth, several statues and three funerary reliefs were severely damaged: one colossal head, so badly hit with a chisel that the face has been completely removed, appears to have represented a god, since holes for the insertion of rays are visible on the head. Three pieces are marked with crosses: a herm was decapitated and a cross was inscribed over the eroded genitals; a cross was inscribed in the upper arm of a torso, and on the forehead of a head depicting perhaps a philosopher. Some sculptures were found in drains: the head of the philosopher and another one of a priest, both dating to Late Antiquity, in a drain of the Peirene Fountain, the head of Dionysus and the head of a female, dating perhaps to 6th c., in the great drain of the Peribolos of Apollo, and near them two other portraits severely defaced. These heads might have been a cultic group, perhaps of Dionysus, and their deposit in drains might indicate a ritual deposit, probably as a Christian hostile action in the late 6th c. or early in the 7th.¹¹⁹

Disposal of pagan statuary in rivers, wells and drains in the belief that they were neutralised and returned where they belonged, is known from several other sites.¹²⁰ Ritual destruction and disposal of statues by Christians in order to ridicule them or neutralise their demons are

¹¹⁵ Rothaus (2000) 119; Riccardi (1998).

¹¹⁶ Themelis (1999) 101–12.

¹¹⁷ Paus. 4.32.1. Themelis (2000a) 137–58; Themelis (2000b); Themelis (2003) 52–60.

¹¹⁸ Themelis (2000a) 74; Themelis (1998–99).

¹¹⁹ Rothaus (2000) 121–25.

¹²⁰ Merrifield (1987) 96–103.

described in the *Life* of Severus of Antioch by Zachariah Scholasticus.¹²¹ The placing of statues face down, a position in which statues have been often found in excavations, is also attested in literature.¹²² Other conspicuous cases, mentioned above, are those of the sculptures of the Asklepion in Athens, and the pieces of pagan sculptures thrown in the wells of the agora of Argos, mutilated or broken into numerous fragments. When parts of statues are found incorporated in other structures, they may have been used as building material for convenience, or their position may suggest the Christians' desire to ridicule and insult the symbols of the old religion. Thus in House C in Athens the torso of an Athene was used as a stepping block, and in Sparta many idols and dedicatory sculptures to Artemis Kyparissia, taken from the nearby temple, were found (28 of which were in fact largely intact) under the pavement of a Late Roman street; there were also many fragments of similar idols representing Artemis.¹²³

Crosses marking statues have been interpreted as an attempt to exorcise the demons of the statues or to Christianise them, and in such cases the cross stood for the *sphragis* of the baptism. One of the most remarkable examples comes from Sparta. The head of the statue has its eyes and the mouth 'sealed' with crosses and one more is inscribed on the forehead.¹²⁴ On pagan monuments of cultic significance, crosses were also inscribed to Christianise them, as seen on the numerous crosses and the Tree of Life inscribed on blocks in Delphi and the dozens of crosses and nine circles engraved on the altar of Chios.¹²⁵

Statues found on city walls, as, for example, those incorporated in the wall of Dion, may have possessed some apotropaic power.¹²⁶ It is very rare to be able to discern pagan beliefs expressed in the architectural composition of Early Christian basilicas in Greece. A most striking example is found in the Early Byzantine basilica at Eleutherna in Crete, a basilica located next to a pagan temple dedicated

¹²¹ Zac. Myt. *V. Sev.* PO 2/1 (1907) 27–35.

¹²² Timbie and Zaborowski (2006) 103–104.

¹²³ Kourinou (2000) 179–80.

¹²⁴ Maguire (1992) 144 and fig. 27; Delivorrias (1991); Hjort (1993).

¹²⁵ Amandry (1981) 740 and figs. 59, 60.

¹²⁶ Pantermalis (1999) 117. Other statues and funerary inscriptions incorporated in the same wall in Stephanidou-Tiberiou (1998) 51 (8), 52 (21), 164 (117), 165 (118), 197 (151), and the most striking, the Monument with the Shields, depicting sculptured shields incorporated on the exterior of the wall: Stephanidou-Tiberiou (1998) 94 (54).



Fig. 6 The hermaic stele as found in the excavations (courtesy of Professor P. Themelis).

to psychopomp Hermes and Aphrodite. It was built, according to an inscription in the mosaic floor of the narthex, by the first bishop of Eleutherna, Euphratas, and dedicated to the Archangel Michael. Much building material, as well as inscriptions and sculptures were incorporated in the basilica, its annexes and in the wall enclosing the ecclesiastical complex. Three herms with their heads, arms and sexual organs removed were reused as lintels for the two doors leading from the narthex to the aisles and for the door leading to the north annexes of the basilica (figs. 6, 7). According to the excavator, P. Themelis, the removal of the herms' parts was done not on account of religious fanaticism, but in order to facilitate their reuse.¹²⁷ The use of the hermeic pillars in such a conspicuous place at the church doors might be taken as a continuation of the pagan belief that Hermes protected

¹²⁷ *AR* 44 (1997) 124–25; Themelis (1994–96); Themelis (2004) 50.



Fig. 7 One of the hermaic stelai found in the basilica at Eleutherna (courtesy of Professor P. Themelis).

entrances, while at the same time the decapitated god was neutralised and his offending naked parts were removed.¹²⁸ In the same basilica, a Roman altar found broken at the propylon of the narthex may have been used by the early Christians and kept there as a precious relic; a Hellenistic *periranterion* of dark marble was used as a phiale in the narthex.¹²⁹

Appreciation of pagan statuary by early Christians has also been discerned in some sites in Greece. Thus statues of Giants and Tritons removed from the Odeum of Agrippa in Athens were reused in the Palace of the Giants and some parts of its architectural design show a nostalgic appreciation of Athens' classical monuments.¹³⁰ At Olympia, provision was taken to set up bronze statues without their bases, fixed directly on the pavement slabs, between the columns of the south side of the Temple of Zeus—these would have provided a fine spectacle at the sunset from the Early Christian settlement dating to the mid 5th c.¹³¹

CEMETERIES AND EPITAPHS

Evidence for the conversion of pagans to the new religion is extremely limited in the archaeological record. The early steps made by Christianity in the 3rd c. are illustrated in some inscriptions from the city of Edessa, in northern Greece. Of the six Early Christian funerary inscriptions only one displays the Christogram, whilst the others are presumed to be Christian on the grounds of the vocabulary employed. Most interesting is the inscription for Nikandros:

[Neophyte] / and his wife, / Antigone, for Nikandros / has accepted the end of life, / by wretched illness / subdued, / his soul to the ethereal aeons (ψυχὴν αἰθερείαις αἰῶσι θέτο) / he set and his body to the earth, / until the glad day of resurrection comes, / pure, since through his

¹²⁸ An epigram from Epidaurus records the transfer of a statue of a herm on a base to the propylaia of an unspecified building: *IG* 4.1032; 4² 515; Robert (1948) 7–10. Pausanias mentions Hermes Propylaios set up in the Propylaia of the Acropolis of Athens: Paus. 1.22.8.

¹²⁹ Themelis (2004) 48–49, figs. 24, 25, 28. Reuse of a pagan altar for liturgical purposes in a Christian church is mentioned in the *Life of St. Parthenios* (*PG* 114: 1352D).

¹³⁰ Frantz (1988); Saradi (2006) 257.

¹³¹ Sinn (2004) 230.

desirously (εἰσόκαι ἀναστάσεως εὐάγγελον ἡμαρ εἵκητε) / he has attained divine washing (ἀγνός, ἐπὶ καὶ θείου ποθῶν ἐπετεύξατο λουτροῦ).

The conjectural reading of the first word is ‘neophyte’. The use of the words ‘resurrection’ (ἀνάστασις) and holy baptism (θεῖον λουτρόν) is remarkable: the ‘ascent of his soul to the ethereal aeons’ is a phrase that may carry pagan connotations, but the belief in the resurrection of his body leaves no doubt that the deceased was a Christian. Nikandros may have received late baptism, either because he was converted at the end of his life, or because, as many Christians of the time did, he may have postponed baptism to have himself purified of all his sins just before he died.¹³²

Christians and pagans were in close contact with each other in daily activities, thus marking late antique religious life with complexity and richness. In numerous cases, archaeological evidence testifies to the continuous use of artefacts bearing pagan symbols in a Christian context.¹³³ Christian funerary inscriptions from Athens reveal the progress of Christianity in the name of the deceased, while at the same time some Christians maintained very explicit pagan names, such as Asklepiarion, Asklepia, Asklepiodote and Oinophilos.¹³⁴

Cemeteries also reveal the persistence of pagan beliefs in funerary practices. North of the city of Edessa, a rural cemetery containing 45 tombs has been recently discovered, dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries.¹³⁵ As in other areas in Greece, such as Thebes and Thessalonica, this rural cemetery contained mixed burials of pagans and Christians: 29 burials oriented to the east have been suggested as belonging to Christians, although in these ‘Christian’ burials pagan funerary practices survive: broken vases found over all of the tombs bear witness to the holding of funerary meals, while a coin placed in the mouth (the ancient obol for the passage to Hades) is found in three tombs. The unbroken vases, small *oinochoai* and a glass *myrdocheion*, found in 16 tombs, contained aromatic oil—an ancient pagan and Jewish tradition maintained by the early Christians and continued until the Late Byz-

¹³² Feissel (1983) 25–29 (no. 5); Llewelyn (1998) 176–79. The angel and the aether are known from the pagan monotheistic cult of Theos Hypsistos of the Roman imperial period: Mitchell (1999).

¹³³ See Ribak (2004); Saradi (2006) 355–84, esp. 382–83.

¹³⁴ Gregory (1986) 239–40; Sironen (1997) nos. 43, 71, 99.

¹³⁵ Paisidou (2003).

antine period.¹³⁶ Cups and plates found in the tombs refer to the pagan belief that the deceased were fed in the afterlife. Of further interest are the traces of burning on the tombs, connected with the funerary ritual in which fire and the offering of incense served to purify the dead. Remains of burned material in contact with the head in some tombs may be evidence of such an incense offering. Finally, in one tomb the head of the buried woman was moved to the north-east corner, perhaps indicating superstition. It might, however, suggest the customs of people of a different culture who apparently settled in the area.¹³⁷

The context of the Christian cemetery in the courtyard of the Temple of Asclepius at Corinth and to the north and east of it, containing 300 Christian burials, is different. The burials appeared after the destruction of the temple and are dated either to the late 5th c. or possibly to the 6th c. In the middle of the temple courtyard, where the Christian cemetery had spread, a *sigma* table for funerary meals was recovered. In the tombs were found *lekhythoi* and pitchers used for anointing the bodies in the ritual before burial and left inside the tomb; some had been broken over the graves, so they would not be reused. A dish left in one of the graves may have been used for boiled whole grain mixed with pomegranate seeds (today's *kolyva*). Interestingly, the vessels left on the site date to the late 6th c. It is suggested that the continuity of the pagan custom may indicate religious syncretism, the continuation of the antique practice by the last pagan converts to Christianity, or even the presence of burial customs of rural or foreign people. Noticeably, most of the lamps of the Christian cemetery of the Corinthian Asklepieion bear Christian symbols, most commonly the cross.¹³⁸

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

There are, as we have seen, difficulties in trying to draw general conclusions on the aspects of late paganism in Greece and the transition to Christianity. The tenacity of late paganism and the final forms of religious expression differ from one site to another. The process of the

¹³⁶ See John Chrysostom, *PG* 60: 725.

¹³⁷ Such customs are attested in the West: Merrifield (1987) 71–76.

¹³⁸ Sanders (2005) 430–37.

transition from pagan temples to Christian basilicas also varies.¹³⁹ This is partly a reflection not just of local histories but of the nature of the surviving evidence. Archaeological evidence, combined with inscriptions and literary sources, which refer mainly to Athens, gives a sense of the cultural and religious life in Greece in Late Antiquity. In most cases, however, evidence of late paganism is mainly epigraphic, numismatic or drawn from the pottery.¹⁴⁰ The interpretation of this surviving evidence is often difficult not just in terms of patterns of survival but also from its very nature.

The interpretation of the destruction of temples is often speculative: was it earthquakes, enemy invasions, or attacks by Christians? For example, the temple and oracle of Aphrodite Erykine (*Soteira*) in north-western Arcadia, in the view of the excavator, were destroyed by early Christians, especially the parts that had special cultic significance: the altar, the *omphalos*, the free-standing column and the purification pool were destroyed; the holy fountain was blocked as if to silence it, and its underground pipe broken at the two ends; the holy oak was uprooted and the tripod was removed and only its base was found overturned.¹⁴¹ However, the absence of any evidence of a Christian presence at the site has also led to the theory that the sanctuary was destroyed by the Visigoths in order to discourage local Greeks from continuing to worship Artemis.¹⁴² Since this view is not based on any new archaeological evidence, it remains speculative. On the other hand, the final collapse of the temple at Nemea was for a long time attributed to an earthquake, until it was shown that the collapse was caused, not by an earthquake, but by someone undermining the columns, thus bringing about the collapse of the building.¹⁴³ Even when the violent destruction of a temple and its statues is obvious in the archaeological record, the reasons for its collapse may remain unclear. Evidence of violent attack against the Temple of Demeter and Kore in Corinth is to be seen in the presence of the heads of two statues of

¹³⁹ For a new account of the history and archaeology of temple conversion see Bayliss (2004).

¹⁴⁰ *IG* 4.35. A late poem from Megara in honour of Asclepius mentions a priestess of Artemis Orthosia, daughter of the Asclepiad Euctimenus: *IG* 7.113. Many lamps found in the Temple of Demeter in Dion indicate that the cult continued into the 4th c.: Pingiatoglou (1996) 229–30.

¹⁴¹ Kardara (1988) 157, 169–70, 251, 273–74 and *passim*.

¹⁴² Velissariou (1991).

¹⁴³ Hill (1966) 8; Miller (1986).

priestesses and of a female cult statue that were thrown into a well in the middle terrace. While Christian attack would appear most likely, the excavators rule out neither the action of an earthquake nor looting by Visigoths as a possible cause for the demise of the temple.¹⁴⁴

Conversely, the conversion of pagan temples into Christian churches in Greece is problematic for reasons of chronology. Recent research has raised the number of churches built at the site of pagan temples in Greece to about 100, almost equally split between continental Greece and the islands.¹⁴⁵ They date mainly to the 5th and 6th centuries. However, here chronologies rest too often on stylistic observations of the sculptural and mosaic decoration of the new churches, which by nature are not exact. In some cases, hostile activity by Christians is documented with certainty at some point, although it remains unclear whether Christians, or earthquakes and enemy attacks were to blame for the initial destruction of many temples.

Statuary evidence is also prone to misinterpretation. There are only a few cases in which archaeologists can detect the destruction of pagan statues by Christians with certainty. The scenario of ritual destruction of statues that has been proposed in some cases, as in the case of Corinth, may be difficult to be construed as precise historical fact at specific sites. The reuse of statues for convenience in other structures appears to have been widely spread. At the same time, the process of Christianising statues by incising the sign of the cross implies a sincere appreciation of the antique art and a conscious inclusion of this art in Christian culture. The significance of statue destruction is also complicated by uncertainties over chronology: the significance of these acts will of course have varied if they took place in the 4th c. (when they were active cult statues) or in the 7th c. (when they might have been garden ornaments). Archaeological reports are often incapable of providing the exact dates for destruction, due to poor contextual recording. But as excavation methods are becoming more precise and the range of sites excavated and studied is increasing, so more reliable evidence is becoming available.

Nevertheless, despite these reservations, an overall picture is emerging. There is much evidence for continuity of pagan ritual activity

¹⁴⁴ Bookidis & Stroud (1997).

¹⁴⁵ These are the results of the completed research for the Ph.D. dissertation by D. Eliopoulos (University of Peloponnese). Earlier study by Foschia (2000).

within cities into the late 4th c. However, the late 4th and early 5th c. was a period of struggle, in which many of the most prominent sacred sites were closed. From the mid 5th c. cities were visibly Christianised and Christian churches were spreading; by then, some temples, such as those of Corinth, lay in ruins, whilst others were still standing and transformed. In Athens, respect for the city's cultural tradition led to the maintenance of the prestigious temples as shells for Christian churches. Yet Philippi—which possessed about 35 deities in the 2nd and 3rd c., together with rock paintings and rock sanctuaries—had become a major Christian centre honouring St. Paul, and possessed several major Christian basilicas. At the same time, the pagan rock paintings and rock sanctuaries of the Acropolis continued to dominate the city.¹⁴⁶ If pagan cults continued at some sites, they were weakened and discreet, or had become fused into syncretic religious rituals and habits within local popular Christian practice.

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¹⁴⁶ Tsohos (2003). On the Christian topography of Philippi see Saradi (2006) 393–95 with earlier bibliography.

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LATE PAGANISM ON THE AEGEAN ISLANDS AND PROCESSES OF CHRISTIANISATION

Georgios Deligiannakis

Abstract

Detailed case-studies of Aegean paganism and temple conversion are presented for six sanctuaries in the Province of the Islands, and are assessed as part of the debate on Christianisation from western Asia Minor to mainland Greece. It is argued that, despite many similarities between the eastern islands and western coastal Asia Minor, there is little cultural homogeneity between the many sub-regions in this wide area.

THE LATE HISTORY AND AFTERLIFE OF PAGAN SANCTUARIES

This paper aims to discuss, through a number of case-studies, the end of ‘public’ paganism and the phenomenon of temple conversion in the Province of the Islands (*provincia insularum*) from roughly the mid-3rd to the 6th c. It also addresses the issue of Christianisation and seeks to place the focus area within the religious landscape of the eastern Mediterranean. This analysis cannot claim to discuss everything which the term ‘paganism’ might entail. We are forced to turn our attention to those things that we know enough about, that is pagan cult associated with temples, and cannot say much about other equally, if not more, important forms of pagan practices which persisted for longer—such as private cult, divination, pagan ‘holy men’, magic, etc.¹ This point must be remembered when the evidence is gathered for the Christianisation debate, since the study of public paganism in temple grounds tends to preoccupy scholars and influence their views.

The scarcity of written sources and the inadequate archaeological study of most sites prevent us from presenting a synthesis of the evidence, which is both fragmented and erratic; this situation makes a micro-area study of late paganism on the islands very difficult. A possible

¹ E.g. MacMullen (1997); Gregory (1986) 229–42.

framework is to view this material in relation to the evidence from Asia Minor and mainland Greece, since the Aegean coasts of Asia Minor seemingly had strong political, cultural and economic bonds with the island communities (see discussion below).

Before studying this material, it is essential to make some general observations. First, we should acknowledge the changing nature of pagan cult in the material record in this period. There was a dramatic decline in inscriptions proclaiming public allegiance to, and private support for, the cults of the traditional gods after *ca.* A.D. 260. However, this should not simply be taken as proof that veneration of temples at these sites ceased, as there are indications of continuing cult activities in literary and epigraphic sources, and some archaeological evidence, as this paper will demonstrate. Evidently, there were complex cultural and economic changes at work in the traditional pattern of elite behaviour in Late Roman society.² Yet, it is certain that the physical condition of the temples deteriorated and blood sacrifice was drastically restricted. This can be attributed in part to anti-pagan legislation and the confiscation of temple funds from the time of Constantine onwards. It is also believed that pagan religion in the Late Imperial period may have been slowly distancing itself from blood sacrifices as a result of internal developments within paganism itself.³ On the other hand, contemporary pagan and Christian narratives illustrate that cult activity did continue to linger on at these sites in the form of frequent visits, sacrifices, and small offerings in the 5th and 6th c.; groups of pagan devotees are reported to have visited temples in order to perform familiar rites or just to pray, even when these buildings had been desacralised or were in ruins.⁴ A number of temples were

² Brown (1978) 45–53; Mitchell (1993) 55–56; Heather (1994) 11–33.

³ In *Or.* 30 Libanius offers a subtle picture of how the pagan population adjusted its ceremonies to the imperial laws and to the Christian hostility against the pagan cults. For Julian and blood sacrifice: Bradbury (1995). The decline of blood-sacrifice as part of pagan cult is questioned by Lane Fox (1986) 70–72.

⁴ E.g. Lib. *Or.* 17.22 (the Temple of Apollo at Daphne), and *Or.* 14.41 (Aristophanes of Corinth). *Or.* 1.143, and 30.39 (visit to Asclepius at Aigeai in Cilicia in 371); Marinus *Vita Procli* 29 (the Athenian sanctuary of Asclepius); Dam. *Isid.* fr. 145 (Hegias of Athens) and *passim*; Zos. 4.3.2–3 (exemption granted to Eleusis). From a Christian point of view, John of Ephesus, Evagrius and Pseudo-Zachariah for the extraordinary story of the Temple of Baalbek at Hierapolis: van Ginkel (1995) 131; Isidore of Pelusium, in an obscure passage, seems to imply that pagans continued to perform cult activities within the precincts of the ruined Temple of the Ephesian Artemis in the

even repaired or built anew during the 4th c., and occasional restorations of temples are also attested during the 5th c.⁵ In fact, the lack of evidence for new buildings should not be equated with the cessation of cult on these sites. Contemporary literary texts reveal the flexibility of the pagan population to comply with the laws concerning sacrifices and other forms of pagan veneration. Furthermore, the tendency of the Christian sources to present Christian victory in the course of the 4th c. as definite and without serious resistance very much distorts our view about the tenacity of paganism during the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries.⁶

In the following section, the surviving epigraphic and archaeological evidence from key religious centres of the archipelago are discussed: firstly, the study of the Athena sanctuary at Lindos and the Heraion of Samos enables us to look at the common fate of two important shrines of the Aegean region and their different role in provincial politics and social life; next the Artemis cult of Patmos raises interesting questions about the character of late paganism; and, finally, the Temple of Apollo at Halasarna provides a telling example of what really happened to most of the pagan sites in this period, and raises the problem of how to recognise pagan cult on the ground when sacrifices, idol-worshipping, and other traditional elements of pagan cult were demonumentalised and outlawed.

The Sanctuary of Lindian Athena, Rhodes

Lindos, which ceased to be an independent city in 408 B.C., owed its importance in later centuries to the popularity of its sanctuary, which became the principal religious centre of the island. A series of 3rd/4th c. inscriptions from the acropolis here helps us to obtain a picture of the late history of the famous shrine of Athena Lindia. In contrast, the only structure of Late Roman date at this sanctuary is a temple built on a podium near the north corner of the Temple of Athena together with a portico. This building may be identified with either the temple

5th c.: *PG* 78: 217; the Egyptian abbot Shenute says that he met a pagan worshipper in the ruins of the temple of Atripe: Smith (2002) 244.

⁵ For a list of relevant evidence from East and West: Bayliss (2004) 14.

⁶ The Christian representation of 4th c. history: Brown (1998).

of the demon Psithyros (Whisperer), attested in a late verse inscription (*ca.* A.D. 200), or a temple of the imperial cult.⁷

During the 3rd c., we hear of a number of priests of Athena and other notables, who lavishly supported the cults. They took up priest-hoods and sponsored public festivals and feasts; they paid for repairs and the embellishment of the sanctuary's buildings and statues.⁸ A senatorial family from Rhodes (with some members from the island of Chalki) that had offered services and financial support to Athena, was that of Tiberius Claudius Hermias Theopropos and Ailia Peithias; honorary statues of Hermias' family occur at Chalki, Ephesus, Sardis and Olympia.⁹ These inscriptions evoke a strong sense of piety, traditional religion, and local mythology.

A list of goods for a public feast approximately dated to after 250 and fragments of purity laws dated to the early 3rd c. offer additional insight into the character of Athena's cult in this period.¹⁰ A feature of the latter texts is that they not only require the traditional purification rituals, aiming at the purification of the body from ritual pollution, but also 'purity of mind'.¹¹ There are two more particular features of the cult of Athena at Lindos which seem to follow the popular trends of Greek religion, something that could partly explain the apparent vitality of the sanctuary in the Late Roman period: the long-respected tradition of bloodless sacrifices to the goddess and her miraculous character. These two elements may well have made the Lindian cult immune to Christian polemic against blood sacrifices and perhaps popular among post-Constantinian pagans, especially intellectuals.

Among the texts tentatively dated to *ca.* 300 found in the sanctuary, besides a fragmentary verse dedication to a goddess, is a group of elevated epigrams cut on the rocky slopes of the Acropolis by the priest of Athena, Aglochartos.¹² In no fewer than three epigrams, Aglochartos

⁷ *Lindos* 2.2. 484. The inscription attests to the function of the temple of Psithyros as an oracle; *Lindos* 3.2. 295 (Diocletian?); Price (1984) 250; Papachristodoulou (2006) 17–18.

⁸ *Lindos* 2.2. 469–79, 486, 488, 490–94, 639; *PIR* (2nd edn.) C 885; *PIR* (2nd edn.) A 306.

⁹ *Lindos* 2.2, 469, 472–77, 639; Holtheide (1982); *SEG* (1985) 616.

¹⁰ Sokolowski (1962) 91; *Lindos* 2.2 487), 3rd c.; Sokolowski (1969) 139 (*IG* 12.1.789), 2nd/3rd c. Cf. Sokolowski (1962) 86 (*Lindos* 2.2, 484), *ca.* 200; Sokolowski (1969) 108, mid-1st c.; Parker (2004) 57–70 (Sacred Laws).

¹¹ For the notion of 'purity of thought' in a sanctuary's purity regulations: Bremmer (2002) 106–108; Chaniotis (1997) 142–79.

¹² Verse to goddess: *Lindos* 2.2, 496 (3rd/4th c.).

boasts that he embellished the *temenos* by renewing a sacred olive grove at the peak of the Lindian acropolis, just like the Attic heroes Keleos and Ikarios, mythical priests of Demeter and Bacchus respectively, had similarly done to honour their gods.¹³ The sacred grove of Athena was an essential part of the cult on the acropolis and endured until its later stages. The most elaborate of these epigrams was cut into the back support of an exedra on a terrace situated at the bottom of the steep staircase to the acropolis. Inside a sacred grotto on a terrace below the temple, known today as Panagia Spiliotissa, a fourth inscription by the priest of Athena, Lucius Ailius Aglochartos, was found. Since the form of these letters suggests an earlier date (*ca.* 200), it therefore seems likely that the priesthood of Athena had evolved as a tradition for the Aglochartos family.¹⁴ Interestingly, the position of the last inscription indicates a cult location for the sanctuary that was later turned into a site of Christian worship.¹⁵

However, the most important source of information for the late history of the sanctuary comprises two statues of Lindian Athena in Constantinople, which may have flanked the entrance of the Augusteion Senate.¹⁶ The decoration of the Senate was undertaken possibly during the reign of Theodosius I. The building was destroyed in 404, thus providing a *terminus ante quem* for the statue's removal to Constantinople.¹⁷ The same, or another, statue of Lindian Athena is said to have been on display in the collection belonging to the aristocrat Lausus, together with statues of Aphrodite of Knidos, Hera of Samos, Zeus of Olympia and other classical masterpieces. A possible date for the installation of Lausus' collection is *ca.* 420, during Lausus' first period as court chamberlain to Theodosius II. We know that this collection was destroyed by fire in 476.¹⁸ Kedrenos and Zonaras attribute the statue of Lausus' Athena to two early 6th c. BC sculptors, Skyllis and Dipoinos; it is also said that the statue was a gift of an Egyptian ruler to Kleoboulos

¹³ *Lindos* 2.2, nos. 498; *IG* 12.1.779–83. See also three similar epigrams from a temple of the Nymphs at the site of Loryma (south of Massari): *IG* 12.1. 92. 8.

¹⁴ *Lindos* 2.2, 485.

¹⁵ *Lindos* 3.2, 445–47.

¹⁶ *Zos.* 5.24; see also Hesychius *De originibus urbis Constantinopoleos* 17. Zosimus explicitly says that the statue survived, hence it is possible that the statue was acquired by Lausus (see below).

¹⁷ Bassett (2004) 90.

¹⁸ Bassett (2004) 100.

of Rhodes.¹⁹ Bassett notes that the Athena, to which Kedrenos refers, was possibly a votive offering to the sanctuary and not its classical cult statue.²⁰ Yet there can be little doubt that the Archaic statue weighed heavily in aesthetic and presumably religious terms on the minds of contemporaries and is likely to have been thought of alongside the most famous masterpieces of classical sculpture. One may surmise, however, that when the statues were removed the sanctuary they originated from still remained in good condition.

Thus, the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos remained an important religious centre for the island across the 3rd and possibly part of the 4th c. The severe drop in epigraphic evidence comes as no surprise as it corresponds to the general contemporary decline of the epigraphic habit and is not necessarily linked to religious change. The apparent lack of evidence for Christian iconoclasm may indicate that the pagan cult at Lindos slowly withered away. It is also tempting to suggest that some special aspects of the Athena cult made it popular among late pagans and immune to Christian attack. However, there is no way to determine the impact that the removal of these statues had on the sanctuary, but it must reflect an official closure of the cult. In this instance, the closure should be before 404, when the Augusteion Senate was destroyed.

The Heraion of Samos

The famous sanctuary of Hera on Samos offers the best documentation concerning the late history of a pagan sanctuary from the study region. During the 3rd c., the sanctuary underwent a new phase of repair work.²¹ For the next century, three inscriptions, which were inscribed on a single pier of the peripteros Temple of Hera, have been identified: a dedication to Hera and the Tetrarchs (308–11) by the city of Samos and two epigrams to Hera by Aidesi(o)s and Plutarch.²² Plutarch—and possibly Aidesi(o)s too—was the imperial governor of the Islands. Aidesi(o)s' text attests that he built or repaired the Temple

¹⁹ Kedrenos *Compendium Historiam* 1.564, 616; Zonar. 3.131. Bassett (2004) 233 notes how 'in broad outline this information accords well with what is known about the Lindian sanctuary'. Therefore, the association of the statue in Constantinople with the Lindian sanctuary is quite likely.

²⁰ Bassett (2004) 235.

²¹ Walter (1976) 106ff; Kyrieleis (1984) 82–84.

²² *IG* 12.2. 610, 584.

of Hera, while Plutarch, who was a learned pagan and Roman senator, commemorates his pilgrimage to two important Aegean pagan cults, the Idaean Cave on Crete and the famous sanctuary of Hera. The *basileus* in the text was possibly the Emperor Julian, who made Plutarch *praeses provinciae insularum*; Plutarch was arguably a personal friend of the emperor.²³ The Aidesi(o)s epigram is supposed to be contemporary with the inscription of the Tetrarchs (or Julian's reign).²⁴ Two more imperial governors of the Islands are attested in dedicatory pagan inscriptions from Samos; they cannot be dated more precisely than sometime in the 4th c.²⁵

The high number of 4th c. inscriptions of provincial governors attested in the Samos inscriptions, compared with the almost total absence of similar material from Rhodes, should reflect the high importance of the sanctuary of Hera and its popularity in pagan circles. That three provincial governors between Diocletian (284–305) and (probably) Julian (361–63) offered a dedication to the famous Hera of Samos, probably shows that this sanctuary was the most sacred and important pagan site in the Islands—hence, the difference between the Heraion and Lindos, as revealed by the epigraphic evidence, may have been the inter-regional character of the Hera sanctuary in contrast to the more local character of the sanctuary at Lindos.

The accession of Julian was probably hailed with enthusiasm on Samos and the other islands. A testimony of this is an honorary inscription praising the new Augustus, set up by a group of private notables, or an association, at Samos.²⁶ We can imagine here a circle of pagan enthusiasts, similar to those Julian had met in Pergamum and Ephesus a few years earlier.²⁷ Several other inscriptions honouring Julian are attested from cities in Asia Minor.²⁸ As with Plutarch, literary pagans were appointed by Julian as governors of Achaia and

²³ It is also likely that Plutarch's father was proconsul of Achaia: Chaniotis (1987).

²⁴ Hallof and Kienast (2001) 277–89; *PLRE* I. Aedesius 4, 15.

²⁵ *IG* 12.2. 585, found in the Heraion (*PLRE* I. Gregorius 5); and *IG* 12.2. 605–607 (*PLRE* I. Attius Epinicius).

²⁶ *IG* 12.2. 427; the name of the emperor was later erased, probably by Christians. Cf. Oikonomides (1987) no. 4, 41 (inscription from Ma'ayan Barukh, Palestine).

²⁷ Sanz (1993) 460–61.

²⁸ Conti (2004) 77–92.

western Asia Minor and these are duly attested as offering their support to the pagan temples.²⁹

Quite possibly the Hera sanctuary continued to function for most of the 4th c. Public cult and ceremonies were held at the Heraion during this period, and the sanctuary enjoyed the favour and the gifts of imperial personalities. Closure of the sanctuary may have occurred towards A.D. 400, but the Roman Heraion was only converted into a large Christian basilica, presumably, during the second half of the 5th c.³⁰

To the period *ca.* 420 we could also place the transfer of a 6th c. B.C. statue of Hera of Samos to the Lausus collection.³¹ A good parallel for the late history of the Heraion is the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. The famous chryselephantine statue of Zeus was similarly among the masterpieces of the Lausus' collection. Christian basilicas were erected on both sites around or after the middle of the 5th c.³² If evidence for survival until the official removal of their treasures is what the two sanctuaries have in common, it is sensible to ask whether the decision to remove the statues was also meant to disrupt the enduring pagan worship at these sites.³³

The Artemis Cult on Patmos

The location of the important cult of Artemis Patmia probably underlies that of the later monastery of St. John. A dedicatory inscription mentioning the virgin Vera, priestess of the goddess, thought to belong to the 4th c., vividly illustrates traditional late paganism at a time when polytheist cults were gradually coming under pressure.³⁴ The

²⁹ *PLRE* I. Vettius Agorius Praetextatus 1, esp. 722–23 (Achaia); Conti (2004) nos. 26–28 (Asia), 77–79, no. 44 (Lycia), p. 90; Eunap. *VS.* 501, 547; 503, 555 (Lydia). For the province of Achaia, Eunapius (*VS.* 476) mentions that Julian bestowed on hierophant Nestorius 'gifts worthy of an emperor, and attendants to take care of the temples of Greece.' For a critical view about public response to Julian's restoration of temples and sacrifices: Fowden (1998).

³⁰ Poulou-Papadimitriou (1985) 94f.

³¹ Kedrenos *Compendium Historiarum* 1.564. This statue was not the main cult image of the Heraion but rather a votive, unless it had replaced the one seen by Pausanias (7.4.5); Bassett (2004) nos. 155, 235–37.

³² The Olympian festival probably ceased at the very end of the 4th c. or perhaps a few decades later; the temple was destroyed by fire, possibly during the reign of Theodosius II: Sinn (1999).

³³ Cf. the statue of Athena Parthenos in Marinus' *Vita Procli* 30.

³⁴ *SEG* (1989) 854; Merkelbach and Stauber (1998) 169–70.

virgin Vera, chosen by Artemis herself as her priestess, came as an *hydrophoros* to Patmos from Lebedos in order to celebrate a festival and took part in the sacrifice of a pregnant she-goat. She had been born on the island but grew up in Lebedos. The fact that the dating of the inscription is approximate hinders us from fully appreciating its historical importance and also invites different interpretations. If the text post-dates Constantine's reign, the impression of old-fashioned paganism and the emphasis on blood sacrifice that this inscription conveys seems somehow at odds with a good part of our evidence illustrating pagans' growing fear of sacrificing publicly in large towns and cities. Could then a short trip from Lebedos to the sanctuary of Artemis on Patmos have offered Vera and her circle an excellent opportunity for blood sacrifice without any worry of Christian interference?³⁵

Chaniotis has suggested that the inscription of Vera, together with that of Plutarch on Samos and a third one of the 5th c. pagan priest Helladios in Megara, should be viewed as a "demonstrative defiance of Christian legislation and observance of ancient customs in a period of religious intolerance. Not many people bothered to write epigrams commemorating the fact that they had offered sacrifices before the 4th c.", Chaniotis adds.³⁶ This is the kind of traditionalist paganism that pagan writers liked to mention in their chronicles; we hear Eunapius, for example (*VS* 10.6.8), using the phrase 'sacrificed boldly' (θύσας δέ θαρσαλέως) when referring to Anatolios, the pagan Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum (357–60).³⁷ As Chaniotis points out, references to ritual revivals reflect failures rather than success.³⁸ Indeed, in the 360s the emperor Julian, an enthusiast of blood sacrifice, is portrayed as having reopened the temples and restored sacrifices, while in Damascius' hagiography of late paganism nothing deserves praise more than Proclus' and Asclepiodotus' efforts to revive local cults and spend money on holy places.³⁹ A provocative defiance to Christian intolerance;

³⁵ Cf. Zac. Myt. *V. Sev.* 40 (Paralios and his brothers go outside the city of Aphrodisias to sacrifice); Caseau (2004); Athanassiadi (1993) 9–10 (spiritual tourists in Neoplatonist circles).

³⁶ *IG* 7. 53 (Helladios); Chaniotis (2005) 152, 165–66.

³⁷ See also Eunap. *VS* 23.4.3–4 for the vicar Justus under Theodosius I and the governor of Lydia, Hilarius, who both raised altars and repaired temples in Sardis. The notion of provocative pagan gestures in an environment of serious religious friction is found in epigraphic documents of the 4th and 5th c.: Chaniotis (2002) 83–128.

³⁸ Chaniotis (2005) 152–55.

³⁹ Amm. Marc. 22.5.2 cf. Lib. *Or.* 18.126; *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.3 (Julian); Athanassiadi (1993) 7–10, esp. 9 (on Asclepiodotus' enthusiasm for restoring pagan cult).

a late Neoplatonist emphasis on sacrifice; a testimony to the popular roots of Julian's religion; and/or an expression of traditional paganism lingering on unchecked in the 4th–5th c. eastern Aegean—these are all possible ways to interpret these inscriptions.

The Sanctuary of Apollo and Heracles at Halasarna, Kos

The ongoing systematic excavation of the sanctuary of Apollo and Heracles at Kardamaina (ancient Halasarna) provides important evidence for the history of both the city and its sanctuary, including the sanctuary's late history. In particular, the discovery of an interesting structure in front of the eastern side of the Temple of Apollo is possibly associated with an aspect of late pagan cult that usually passes undetected in the archaeological record, namely the continuation of the cult at a time post-dating the destruction of the temple and the sanctuary.⁴⁰

The excavation of the sanctuary revealed three monumental buildings of the Late Hellenistic period (Building A, B): a temple of the Late Classical/Early Hellenistic period (Building C) and at least two other public buildings of the same period (fig. 1). Building C, of *distylos in antis* design, has been identified with the Temple of Apollo mentioned in numerous inscriptions. The stratigraphical study of the building showed that after suffering serious damage, possibly caused by the earthquakes of A.D. 142/44, it was repaired and remained in use at least until the early 3rd c.⁴¹ Its final demise most likely occurred in the well-known earthquake of 467/69.

During the excavation, large bases of pedestals were found outside and against the east side of Building C, near its northern and southern corners. These bases stood on a stone-paved platform, mostly near the southern corner, flanking the central entrance to the building. A large mass of natural rock and stone rubble, fitted between this and the temple foundations, most probably serving as the fill of either a ramp or a stairway that formed the entrance to the temple. Immedi-

See also Zac. Myt. V. Sev. 16–17 (Asclepiodotus); Fowden (1982) 52–54 (the pagan holy man).

⁴⁰ Kokkorou-Alevras and Deligiannakis (2004) 83–93.

⁴¹ An honorary inscription was cut on an ashlar block of the left pilaster of the temple, which is certainly dated after A.D. 212: Kokkorou-Alevras (2004) 71–76, no. 15 (pl. 15).



Fig. 1 The *bothros* and its components (the author).

ately to the east, and slightly off the alignment of the east-west axis of the temple, a marble bench was found in secondary use. East of the bench, a thick layer of burnt soil covered a large area *ca.* 5 m wide. This layer also covered a rectangular built feature (90 × 70 × 50 cm) discovered at a relatively low level, made of a course of large poros blocks connected by lime mortar. A second series of unhewn stones sealed the structure. A rectangular marble base supporting a pier-like element, that is now missing, was also revealed close to the east side and at the same level. The fill of the rectangular feature mostly contained small fragments of vessels and domestic vases, datable to the Hellenistic and later Roman period, and also burnt—and some unburnt—bones belonging to sheep, pig(s) and hen(s); small pyres were recognised in different parts, and at different layers, of this area.

It seems unlikely that this installation in front of the temple existed when the temple was still in use.⁴² According to C14 analysis of bone and carbon samples from its fill, this material can be dated from the mid-3rd to the mid-4th/early 5th c. Most probably, therefore, the rectangular structure post-dates the temple. Its conspicuous place and the many similarities that this installation shows to other excavated sacrificial *bothroi* suggest a cultic function, organised in tandem with the marble bench (as a table for offerings?) and the large base (of a statue?), all forming the basic elements of a makeshift pagan cult at a time when the Temple of Apollo was lying in ruins.⁴³ Based on the evidence regarding the history of the temple and its surrounding area in this period, it would be reasonable to argue that when the sanctuary had seriously declined and its buildings fallen into disrepair over a long period of time, the pagan cult was re-established, in a modest fashion, by a small group of devotees, perhaps during the 4th to early 5th c., before houses came to occupy the area.

If this interpretation is correct, this represents a rare example of an archaeologically attested persistence of pagan cult on the site of a disused temple. Although contemporary writers do report the presence of pagan devotees and the performance of sacrifice in ruined temples,

⁴² Kokkorou-Alevras and Deligiannakis (2004) 88–89.

⁴³ Comparable evidence for transient cult installations from pagan sanctuaries in Antiquity is also provided by a few classical sanctuaries. A good parallel is the evidence for a makeshift cult-installation of earlier date over the destroyed *sekos* of an Archaic temple of Artemis and Apollo at Kalapodi in Phokis: Felsch (1980) 85ff. In both cases, one can recognise the same archetypal elements of cult, i.e. the altar and a table for offerings.

evidence based on archaeological reports is usually inconclusive.⁴⁴ The problem of the distinction between domestic and cultic activity is not decisively resolved here though, but it seems likely that this reveals a demonumentalised form of pagan cult on the site of a temple. Yet, without a better dating of the lifespan of the cult-installation, it is difficult to know to what extent the reduction of the cult to humble proportions resulted from empire-wide factors or purely local ones. The same question also applies to many pagan sanctuaries from the islands and elsewhere that apparently demonstrate post-3rd c. abandonment. No signs of Christian violence against the buildings of the sanctuary are visible in the archaeological remains. The area of the sanctuary was then occupied by a prosperous settlement extending over a long area beside the coast, with the ruins exploited as a major source of ready-made material for the settlement. Clearly the ruinous sanctuary posed no threat or offence to the (Christian) population.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TEMPLE CONVERSION

Introduction

The conversion of pagan temples into churches forms a major topic in the debate regarding religious confrontation or peaceful transition and continuity in Late Antiquity.⁴⁵ Although temple conversion represents only a part of the process of Christianisation of the ancient built landscape, it also plays a minor role in the broader context of the church construction boom during the 5th and 6th c.⁴⁶ In Late

⁴⁴ Cf. Rothaus (2000) 32–63; Scotton (2002) (review).

⁴⁵ The basic study looking at the conversion of pagan temples into churches is Deichmann (1939). For a recent survey offering valuable discussion and new empire-wide evidence, see Bayliss (2004) who re-stresses the role of archaeology in this field; but see Dijkstra (2005). See also a number of relevant papers in Brands and Severin (2003). For the notion of transition/continuity, see Foschia (2000) 416–21. However, contrary to the emphasis given by some modern scholars, the attitude that often prevailed in the minds of contemporaries was of denying these places their sanctity, or else it was avoidance. Their efforts meant to conquer an unholy and polluted place and make it sacred, rather than continuing its sacred use. For the issue of continuity in ritual, see Chaniotis (2005) 147.

⁴⁶ Vaes' survey (1984–86) illustrated that the Christian reuse of buildings, other than religious ones, was more common in the erection of ecclesiastical buildings in the Early Byzantine period. My own study of the province of Achaia showed that

Antiquity, reuse of pagan sites for the erection of ecclesiastical buildings was far less common than with other types of public buildings. However, the importance of the phenomenon lies in its highly symbolic character as a powerful manifestation of the triumph of one religion over the other, and consequently in its possible impact on the minds of contemporaries. Christian narratives describe, in colourful terms, incidents of spectacular violence against pagan temples and, in some cases, the construction of a church on their site. Their significance for the Christian party was undoubtedly high, but the real extent of the phenomenon in terms of central versus local-based motivation, chronologies and actual numbers, can vary and is a complex question.⁴⁷ A nexus of different issues, such as pragmatism, structural mechanics, imperial legislation, aesthetics, and even civic pride has to be addressed in order to appreciate this phenomenon.

Indeed, any attempt to date a temple conversion without close examination of the archaeological evidence and some understanding of the historical context can be of little value. Too often a chronology relies on the established historical framework of temple conversion shaped by the edicts of the Theodosian Code and the very few examples of historical accounts, creating a somewhat biased interpretation of the actual archaeological data. Therefore, a good degree of caution is needed before taking proposed dates of temple conversions at face value. Here, I shall focus only on examples from my region that seem important for the ongoing debate: a very interesting inscription from Ikaria; the temple-church at Sagkri at Naxos; and the church of *Christos tes Ierousalem* on Kalymnos. Each of these cases raises important questions and effectively contributes to the phenomenology of temple conversion in the East Mediterranean.⁴⁸

approximately 30% of the Early Christian basilicas in the Peloponnese were erected over, or very close to, old pagan temples: Deligiannakis (2002).

⁴⁷ Bayliss (2004) 107–15; Trombley (1993–94) 1.108–22.

⁴⁸ For other examples of converted temples, there is an early church with an elaborate baptistery built in the sanctuary of Athena on the acropolis of Ialysos. Regarding the famous sanctuary of Asclepius on Kos, our evidence refers only to scattered spolia, which makes any Christian use of this site in Late Antiquity rather unlikely: Mposnakis (2002) 11. Impressive examples of temple conversions come from the islands of Lesbos and Chios (Emporio): Kaldellis (2002) 174–76; Ballance *et al.* (1989) 11–46.

The Inscription of Ikaria

An inscription from the island of Ikaria presents one of the most striking documents of Christianisation in the Aegean.⁴⁹ The text cites an oracle of Apollo invented by Christians and is mentioned in a number of literary texts. It is reported by Theodotus of Ancyra (died before 446), Malalas (*ca.* 530), John of Antioch (about the same date), and by an epitome of oracles, known as the Tübingen Theosophy (*ca.* 500), that aimed to show that various pagan oracles agreed with the Christian revelation.⁵⁰ Our text should therefore be dated to the late 5th/6th c.; it also contains a small fragment of a hymn to the Theotokos, which was inscribed later on the stone (in the 6th c.?). In most cases, this oracle is associated with the conversion of the Rhea Temple of Cyzicus on the Sea of Marmara into a church of the Virgin Mary. With some small variants, the story is that when the Temple of Rhea was about to be converted into a church in the reign of Leo I or Zeno, an inscription with an oracle of Apollo predicting the temple's future conversion to a house of Holy Mary was discovered.⁵¹ The text of the oracle in the Ikaria inscription is as follows:

When Apollo said [...] whose house should this be? The oracle was the following: I prophesy, do whatever is conducive to virtue and order, a single triune God ruling on high whose imperishable Logos will be conceived in an innocent (girl). Like a fiery arrow he will course through the middle of the world, capture everything and offer it as a gift to the Father. Hers will be this house. Her name is Maria.

The Ikaria inscription is the only case where this oracle is found on stone and also in a context that seems to follow the original story of the miraculous discovery of the inscription, along with the oracular

⁴⁹ Matthaiou and Papadopoulos (2003) 61f, no. 31; *IG* 12.6.2, 1265. For a history of the island in English: Papalas (1992).

⁵⁰ Thdot. Anc. *Oratio in Sanctam Mariam dei Genitricem* (PO 19.3) no. 93 (1925) 333–34 (not associated with Apollo or a temple, but with the Unknown God and St. Paul's visit to Athens); Malalas: Jeffreys et al. (1986) 38; Tübingen Theosophy: Beatrice (2001) xl–xlii (chronology); John of Antioch: Beatrice (2001) xlii–xlix (he proposes Severus of Antioch, patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 512–18) as the possible author of this work); John of Antioch 1.54–55 (Beatrice (2001) (the text). The large number of preserved manuscripts of this oracle-anthology points to its publicity in Late Antiquity and even later: Mango (1995) 201–13.

⁵¹ Mango (1995) 201–203. In discussing the oracle-text in relation to the conversion of the Athenian Parthenon, Mango was unaware of the Ikarian inscription, which was published in 2003. See Ward-Perkins (1999) 233–40 on the possible motives and social implications of the conversion of the Parthenon.

pronouncement of Apollo, near a pagan temple.⁵² We could guess that the inscription was probably carved at the time of, or shortly after, the erection of a church of Theotokos on the site of a pagan temple. Judging by the historical context of the oracle given by the texts, it is likely that the Virgin Mary church replaced a temple dedicated to a female deity. Indeed, the inscription can be associated with a large basilica beneath the church of Aghia Eirene at Oinoe (9th c.), evidently built beneath an earlier building. The text was intended to give the ideological justification for the conversion of a pagan temple into a church in the eyes of the island's community, and it may have acted as a stimulus to further conversions. The importance of the Ikaria inscription also lies in the fact that it indicates that pagan oracles were widely known in ecclesiastical circles and employed by them, thus illustrating an as yet barely known aspect of the rhetoric of Christianisation in the Aegean region.

That oracular texts were used in this way also shows the surviving non-Christian beliefs of those to whom they were addressed. Further, it supports the credibility of the oracle-stories in relation to the temple conversion of the Rhea temple at Cyzicus and the Athenian Parthenon, and highlights the wide publicity of this oracle as a tool for conversion.⁵³ The oracles at Didyma, Delphi and Claros were not only the most important religious centres of Asia Minor and Greece, but they also played a prominent role in the conflict between pagans and Christians for more than fifty years. By the time this inscription was carved, these famous oracles of Apollo had probably succumbed to Christian use. It is impossible to know the reaction of the populations of Asia Minor to the use of these oracles, or to tell whether temple conversions and the carving of oracular inscriptions were made through local initiative or by external agents. However, the uniqueness of this Ikaria document and the fact that it was discovered in such an unusual place would suggest that it was linked to a centrally organised project, presumably a 'mopping-up operation' by a group of Christian missionaries for the conversion of the people of the island.⁵⁴ The ecclesiastical

⁵² In Malalas' text (see above) the oracle was supposedly written in bronze letters on marble and placed on the lintel over the door of the temple.

⁵³ Mango (1995) 202–203; Kaldellis (2009) 47–53.

⁵⁴ It is worthwhile to mention here the information that Ioannis, the monophysite bishop of Chios (558–566/68), had joined John of Ephesus in his anti-pagan cam-

authorities may have undertaken this endeavour because of the important local cult of Artemis Tauropolos, which the epigraphic evidence indicates survived at least until the 4th c.⁵⁵

Preaching, coercion, and a well-funded project may have all been used for the conversion of the island's inhabitants. On the one hand, one could also argue here for elements of continuity (i.e. in locality and the female deity) and hence a smooth transition from pagan to Christian through the use of the Pythian oracle.⁵⁶

Christianisation of the Sacred Landscape on Naxos

One of most revealing examples of temple conversion in the Aegean islands is presented by the church built over the Archaic rural sanctuary of Demeter and Apollo at Gyroula on Naxos (fig. 2–4). The detailed excavation of this monument adds to its value for the Aegean region by providing insights into the language of temple conversion at island level.

The site is located on top of a low hill overlooking a fertile valley in the south-eastern part of the island. The Archaic temple, dated to ca. 530 B.C., consisted of a *pronaos* with five Ionic columns and two monumental doorways on its long south side.⁵⁷ The temple evidently played the role of the religious centre for five villages scattered over the valley.⁵⁸ The old temple was converted into a church in Late Antiquity, with the stratigraphy and the architectural elements of the

paigns in Asia Minor: Destephen (2008) Ioannis 42. Equally unusual is the discovery of marble plaques with biblical quotations (as part of sermons?) associated with the same site: *SEG* (2003) 899–902. Cf. fragmentary inscriptions with the appearance of moral sermons from Ankara: Mitchell (1977) 93–97; Mitchell (2007). Also, an enigmatic text with a proverbial phrase discriminating against the Jews may indicate religious conflict: *SEG* (2003) 903. Historically Ikaria was largely dependent on Samos; Samian settlers were established here in the 2nd c. B.C.: Robert (1933) 436–37.

⁵⁵ Matthaiou and Papadopoulos (2003) 73–74, no. 39; *IG* 12.6.2.1281. Clement of Alexandria (*prot.* 4.41) and Arnobius (*Adv. nat.* 6.11) also refer to the cult of Artemis on the island.

⁵⁶ Kaldellis (2009) 53 writes on the conversion of the Parthenon: “Triumphalism, in short, was compatible with continuity in Athens, even entangled in it, and rarely expressed itself violently there as it did elsewhere. The point of the oracle in the Theosophy was to enable such a conjunction.”

⁵⁷ Semantoni-Bournia (2001); Lambrinoudakis *et al.* (2002).

⁵⁸ Semantoni-Bournia (2001) 11.



Fig. 2 The sanctuary of Demeter and Apollo at Gyroura.

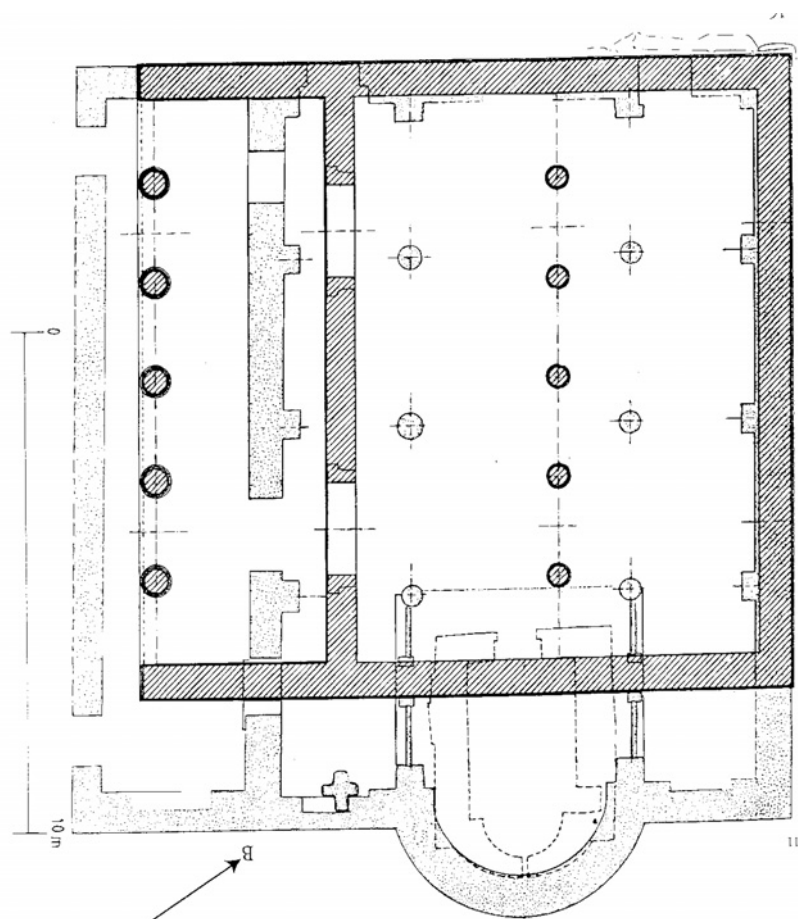


Fig. 3 The temple church at Gyroula (Semantoni-Bournia 2001 fig. 11).

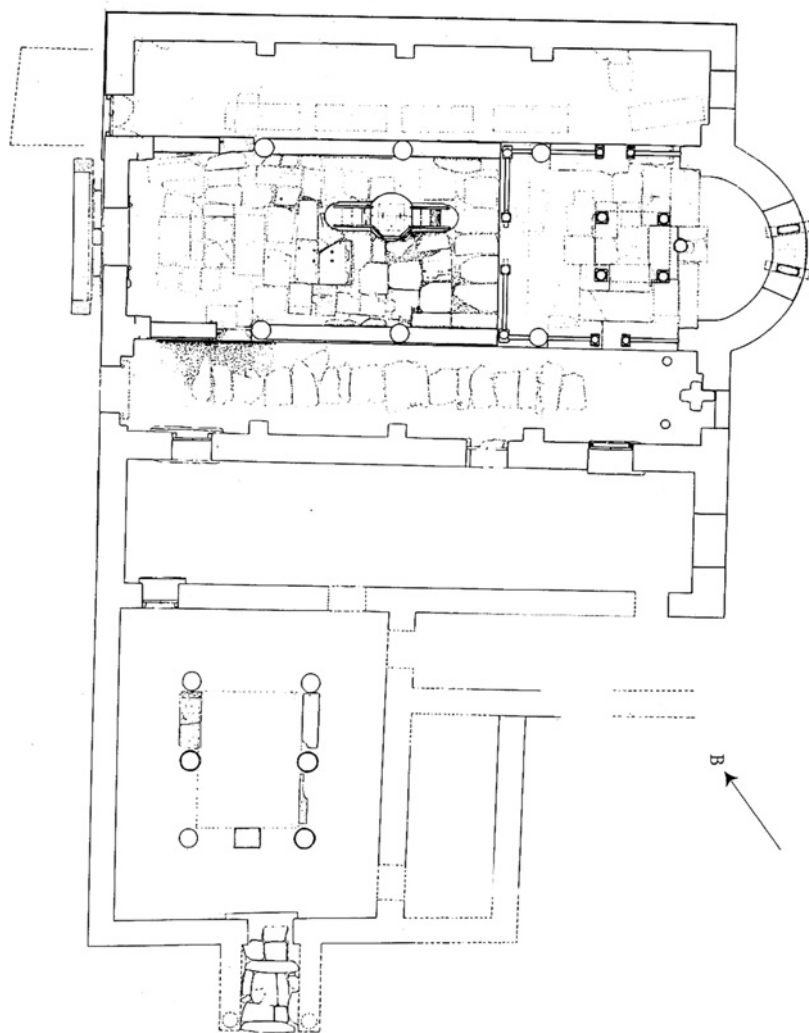


Fig. 4 The temple church at Gyroula (Semantoni-Bournia 2001 fig. 20).

buildings allowing the identification of two major phases of conversion: the first phase entailed limited alterations, whilst the second caused drastic changes to the ancient building, when its walls were almost entirely demolished and the church rebuilt through the reuse of older material obtained from a controlled demolition of the building.⁵⁹ Two colonnades of three columns now separated the former cella. Rectangular piers aligned to the position of the columns were attached to the long walls of the church. The old stone roof of marble tiles was replaced by a wooden saddle one. A small baptismal font was inserted near the eastern wall of the south aisle, while fragments of the marble ambo, the *templon* and the ciborium have been recognised on the site. Moreover, a peristyle atrium of 2 × 3 columns with a central fountain and a main entrance to the complex was added to the south, the latter flanked by a number of lateral rooms and workshops.⁶⁰ Whilst the style of the architectural decoration indicates a 5th c. date, the discovery of a bronze coin of Justinian within the south wall of the main building provides a *terminus post quem* for the church's second phase.⁶¹

Although the diagnostic pottery from the site is limited, it indicates that cultic activity goes back to at least the Late Geometric period. In the light of later finds, the sanctuary shows a period of decline after the 3rd c. B.C. with scanty Roman imperial finds. In contrast, for the 4th to the late 7th/early 8th c. A.D. the growth in the number and variety of the finds is impressive. Nevertheless, the ceramics cannot be indicative of the exact date and circumstances of the temple conversion, nor can the other categories of the archaeological data. What is important here is the secure identification of at least two phases of conversion, of which the first, tentatively placed in the 5th/early 6th c., involved only minor modifications, while the second, approximately dated to the middle of the 6th c. or later, was more drastic. A period of hiatus

⁵⁹ Two phases of conversion: Semantoni-Bournia (2001) 13, 21–26. First phase: The intercolumniations of the *pronaos* were walled up—save the fourth from the east, which became a door—so that the *pronaos* acquired the function of a narthex. Openings were cut into the western wall and parts of the *pronaos* wall were demolished. The original row of columns remained intact. The excavators assumed that the eastern wall of the temple was pulled down at this stage for the building of an apse.

⁶⁰ Semantoni-Bournia (2001) 13, 27–31. The local production of ceramics and lamps is indicated by the discovery of kilns and moulds in the site. Other finds attest to the production of wine and oil, wool-processing and honey-making. The excavators refer to a possible monastic function of the church complex, but it is difficult to prove it.

⁶¹ Semantoni-Bournia (2001) 26.

between the temple and the church can be suggested, but not proven. It would not be unreasonable to assume an intentional withdrawal from the site by the post-Constantinian inhabitants of the Gyroula valley due to the Christian attitude towards pagan temples and an initial hesitation to take the initiative in openly defying imperial legislation. If this did happen, it is clear that this attitude of fear changed later. Rather than imperial policy, demographic or other local factors (e.g. religious syncretism or pragmatism) would have been crucial in determining the timescales and the nature of the activity between the decline of the temple, a supposed but vague transitory period, and the final appropriation of the sanctuary for Christian use.

Potentially, the Gyroula temple-church may be seen as part of an island-wide policy of appropriation of pagan buildings during the 5th and 6th c. Naxos presents two more examples of this: the large Temple of Apollo on the small islet of Palatia in the harbour of Naxos and the sanctuary of Dionysus at Yria at Livadi. The Archaic Temple of Apollo at Palatia was turned into a spacious three-aisled 'cella-basilica', presumably in the 5th c.⁶² The case of the Yria sanctuary, though more problematic regarding the architectural morphology of the converted building, sheds better chronological light on Christian behaviour towards pagan buildings. Here, the Archaic temple (ca. 580–70 B.C.) did not cease to function until at least the late 3rd/early 4th c.⁶³ Although the evidence is somewhat limited, the excavators argued that the temple was later turned into a Christian church, albeit only for a short time, probably involving only minor modifications to the fabric of the building.⁶⁴

Lambertz argued that the material from the *pronaos* wall of the Yria temple was transferred and reused in the construction of the Early

⁶² Kontoleon (1960) 468–72; Welter (1924) 22. The ancient *prostyle* colonnades were blocked and the apse was built into the walls of the church. It should be noted that the orientation of the temple was north-south and the *peristasis* of the building was never finished: Ekschmitt (1993) 264–70.

⁶³ The Archaic temple was the fourth and the largest of the sacred buildings built at Yria. It was an Ionic *prostyle* temple, with *adyton*, marble *prostasis*, and a marble altar. Two tetrastyle marble colonnades divided the building into three aisles. The building received extensive repairs during the Early Imperial period: Lambrinoudakis *et al.* (1987–8) 133–91; Lambrinoudakis *et al.* (1987) 569–621.

⁶⁴ Lambrinoudakis *et al.* (1987–88) 146–47, 163, noting also two marble torsos of cuirassed emperors which originally stood on large bases inside the temple. The excavators claim that the statues were not destroyed before the terminal abandonment of the building: Lambrinoudakis *et al.* (1987–88) 170.

Christian basilica of St. Matthew, located 3 km distant.⁶⁵ If the identification of the spolia is correct, the transfer and reutilisation of the material most probably occurred after the destruction of the temple-church.⁶⁶ The basilica of St. Matthew has been dated on stylistic grounds (mosaics) to the second half of the 6th c.—a period largely corresponding to the second phase of construction in the Gyroula sanctuary, as well as to the date of construction of other churches of the island.⁶⁷ If these assumptions are correct, we might distinguish two different periods of temple conversions on the island: in view of the evidence from Saggri and Yria, the early period of appropriation of pagan buildings involved minor alterations of their architecture (Saggri phase A, Yria temple-church, Palatia temple-church), while the basilica of St. Matthew and phase B of the Saggri basilica along with the other 6th c. Christian monuments on the island, possibly marked the undertaking of a second, more ambitious and elaborate programme of Christianisation involving larger and better-funded projects, the import of decorated pieces of Christian architecture, and a network of supply and transport of old material for reuse in these projects. One could imagine that by the mid-6th c. a confident Christian community would have decided to abandon the Yria site—perhaps also because of the instability of the soil that had necessitated the occasional repair of the temple in the past—to undertake a new project at the St. Matthew site, using the building at Yria as a quarry.⁶⁸

The Temple of Apollo Dalios on Kalymnos

The Early Christian basilica at Christos tes Ierousalem on Kalymnos was built on the site of the Temple of Delian Apollo in the district called Damos, part of the territory of the ancient demos of Pothaea. The church, whose eastern part still stands to roof height, was built almost entirely from spolia, including inscribed blocks, from the temple as well as from other monuments and dedications at the ancient site (fig. 5a–5b). According to Newton, who partly excavated the site, the builders of the church had ‘dislocated and crudely reconstructed all

⁶⁵ Lambertz (2001) 379–408.

⁶⁶ Lambertz (2001) 406–407.

⁶⁷ Early Christian basilicas on Naxos: Lambertz (2001) 389, n.23; Gruben (1999) 297f.

⁶⁸ Lambrinoudakis *et al.* (1987–88) 162–63.



Fig. 5a The EC basilica at *Christos tes Ierousalem* (the author).

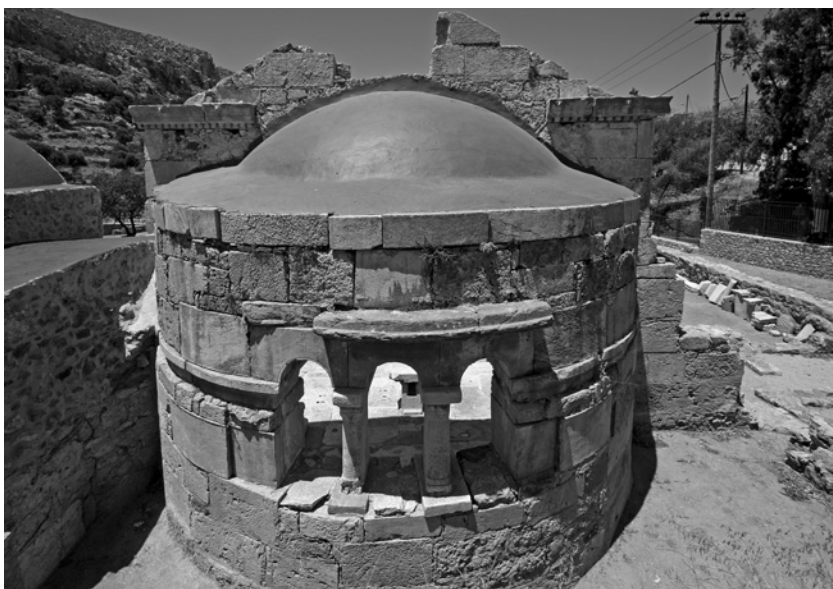


Fig. 5b The EC basilica at *Christos tes Ierousalem* (the author).

that they found'.⁶⁹ It is clear that no attempt was made to re-employ the pre-existing structure, but instead the temple was demolished to provide materials. As the west part of the church has not been excavated, there is no full plan.

Ross reports how people remembered eight fluted columns in a row belonging to the nave colonnades, which supported Corinthian capitals, all possibly belonging to the pagan temple. Only parts of the entablature and the upper wall of the colonnade, supported at its eastern end by a pier are visible today *in situ*. Many other parts of the church made use of the material fabric of the Temple of Apollo and other buildings of the sanctuary. According to an inscription—now lost—carved on a pier capital, construction was supervised by the *oikonomos* Eugenios.⁷⁰ Segre dated the inscription to the 5th c. on palaeographic grounds. The office of *oikonomos* was usually held by a priest who would be responsible for the property, income, and expenditure of a see or religious foundation; in a similar manner, *oikonomoi* often appear on inscriptions in association with construction projects taken by the Church.⁷¹ However, the chronology and the circumstances of the demise of the pagan cult on the site evade us, and the most likely scenario is that an earthquake had turned the Apollo temple into ruins long before its appropriation by the Christian authorities.⁷²

⁶⁹ Newton (1856) 30.

⁷⁰ Segre (1952) no. 229: the inscription reads 'the work was carried out under the office of *oikonomos* Eugenios'.

⁷¹ *ODB* 1517; cf. *I.Smyrn.* 2.2, no. 35; *I.Milet.* 2 no. 966, 973; *SEG* (1987) 1517 (Arabia Quweisme). An Early Christian inscription near Ephesus (*I.Ephes.* 7.1, no. 3134) similarly refers to an *oikonomos* with the name of Eugenios using almost the same phrase; the inscription is also related to the construction of a church.

⁷² In 2001 the Athenian press reported the discovery of a deposit of ca. 30 ancient statues 40 m south of the Christos church inside an ancient drainage channel. No detailed description of the statues and their archaeological context has yet been published, but they included three marble heads belonging to over-life-size statues of Asclepius, Hygieia and an Early Roman portrait together with a number of smaller figures, including images of Apollo and Asclepius. Inscriptions show that some of these statues were votive dedications to Apollo. Their date is believed to range from the 6th c. B.C. to the Early Roman period; associated pottery and small finds are thought to date to as late as the 2nd c. A.D. All statues had heads and limbs broken into pieces; the nose and part of the front side of Asclepius' head were also damaged. Although Christian iconoclasm should not be ruled out here, the deposit most probably relates to a strong earthquake that struck the island in 142/44 A.D.: *Ta Nea*, ('Θησαυρός αγαλμάτων'), p. 1, March 19, 2001, ('Πηγή αρχαίων κούρων η Κάλυμνος'), p. 3, April 17, 2001; *Athens News*, ('Hidden Treasures'), p. 35, March 23, 2001.

CHRISTIANISATION AND THE PROVINCE OF THE ISLANDS

This paper has dealt with late paganism, focusing on material culture and the phenomenon of temple conversion. As we have seen, the lack of written sources, as well as the ambiguity and the deficiencies of the archaeological record set obvious limitations, allowing more than one interpretation. Trying to place this material in the context of the various rhythms of Christianisation in Late Antiquity means entering into a complex and evolving debate of diverse issues, of which various typical criteria are clearly missing here.⁷³ However, it is worth trying to set in a context those things for which we are better informed, using comparative material from Asia Minor and Greece.

Beyond questions about the nature of historical sources of this period, the problems of the enforcement of imperial laws in different regions of the empire vis-à-vis geographical and socio-political circumstances are key. Prosopography has proved a major, yet somehow controversial, tool for assessing the Christianisation process.⁷⁴ The implementation of an imperial law in the province lay largely in the hands of the provincial governor, whose religious persuasion obviously played a significant role. The number of attested officials on the islands from the 4th to the 6th c. is quite small and their dating problematic. Nevertheless, six out of 12 [or 13] known appointees were identifiably

⁷³ For such criteria and regional studies, see Brown (1998) 651, n. 25. The evidence of late antique gravestones as a tool to assess the size of each religious group is of no use in the case of the Aegean islands due to their small numbers and the lack of dating criteria.

⁷⁴ The studies of Brown (1961), von Haeling (1978) and Barnes (1995) on the members of the Roman aristocracy of senatorial rank have been fundamental, strongly influencing recent scholars' modelling of Christianisation. Unlike Barnes, most scholars now agree that up to *ca.* A.D. 400, the majority of the upper classes remained pagan. For the West, see Salzman (2002). The general debate about the period at which the eastern provinces became Christian is summarised by Mitchell (1993) 2. 63–64.

pagan. The earliest identifiably Christian *praeses* of the province was perhaps Zacharias, brother of the famous sophist and theologian Procopius of Gaza, and in office in the late 5th/early 6th c.⁷⁵ On the other hand, secular authority in the islands' cities may have played a less prominent role in the enforcement of anti-pagan edicts than in other major continental cities due to the fact that many of the former were apparently deprived of the presence of the imperial governor for long periods of the year.⁷⁶ If so, it must have been the ecclesiastical authorities, or alternatively the local aristocracy, who led the way on religious matters.

Through an examination of the evidence for the ecclesiastical organisation of the region and of the Christian archaeology (flawed though it may be), there is a suggestion that the south-eastern Aegean islands, or at least the major ones, accepted the new religion earlier than the rest of the islands (e.g. the Cyclades), due, possibly, to their close interaction with the Judaeo-Christian communities of Asia Minor.⁷⁷ Arguably, the archaeological evidence provides enough material to show at least some Christian basilicas in rural areas being built as early as the first half of the 5th c.

Our focus-region involves a distinct category of methodological problems: the diversity of island landscape may suggest a variety of attitudes towards cultural change and in particular to the expansion of Christianity. However, a clear-cut dichotomy between 'progressive' urban centres and a 'backwater' countryside, in terms of religious and cultural change, cannot be applied uncritically to island landscapes; indeed, the thriving economy of the countryside dotted with numerous churches—a possible indication that church building and its cultural implications were as much a rural as an urban phenomenon—may

⁷⁵ Zacharias (late 5th/early 6th c.): *PLRE* II. Zacharias 2. Yet note Anastasios, provincial governor or local benefactor, possibly Christian, with an appreciation of classical art (*ca.* 400): Deligiannakis (2008). For a list of pagan governors: Aedesius: *IG* 12.2.610 (Tetrarchic or 361/63); Gregorius?: *IG* 12.2.585 (4th c.); Attius Epinicius: *IG* 12.2.605–607 (4th c.); Plutarch: *IG* 12.2.584 (361/63?); Gennadius: *PLRE* I. Aurelius Agathus Gennadius 2 (293/305); anonymous appointed by Procopius (365/66): *PLRE* I. Anonymous 117. For an updated list of provincial governors of the Islands, see Deligiannakis (2009) 181.

⁷⁶ *Cod. Iust* 1.40. 6; *Nov.* 41, 50.

⁷⁷ As based on the conciliar lists, a very limited number of passing literary references, epigraphy, and church archaeology: Deligiannakis (2006).

have eroded some of the social and cultural distance between town and countryside at least along the busy coastlines, although this point should not be overemphasised. This issue raises a number of questions: did coastal accessibility favour an early reception to Christianity? Did the proverbial isolation of the interior of these islands help the older cults to survive longer? And how different can an island environment be compared to the urban and rural areas of the mainland?

The better-preserved evidence from the provinces of Asia, Caria, and Lycia may be a guide to what really happened on the islands for a number of reasons; all these provinces along with the *provincia insularum* were subject to the Praetorian Prefect of the East, who was entrusted with the general execution of imperial religious policy; and this makes it more likely, at least in theory, that parallel developments in these regions concerning the enforcement of primarily centrally motivated policies took place. Although this approach may oversimplify the different realities over a vast region and a complex system of provincial rule, it can nevertheless offer a general framework. Besides, the diachronic geographical, cultural and economic bonds between the islands and the coasts of Asia Minor provide an additional reason why we should seek this connection.

In light of the evidence from Greece, considered by Saradi in this volume, and that from western Asia Minor, it seems plausible that pockets of paganism did survive, especially in the remote and rural districts of our study region. Written sources bear witness to the survival of pagans in Athens, Aphrodisias, Sardis and elsewhere in the 5th and 6th centuries. John of Ephesus, for example, depicts a world of still flourishing pagan cults across the hinterland of western Asia Minor well into the 6th c.⁷⁸ In the city of Sardis, the provincial capital of Lydia, an important document records the persecution of the remaining 'pagans' still in 539, while pagan survival in the East through the 6th c. is clearly revealed by many writers, including Evagrius, Ps. Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Damascius and the anonymous author of the *Life of St Symeon the Younger*.⁷⁹ Across the Aegean, wealthy local pagans, even though less vocal than pagan aristocratic families of Aphrodisias, Alexandria, and Athens, may have survived into the 5th c., although their existence cannot be inferred with certainty from our sources.

⁷⁸ Van Ginkel (1995).

⁷⁹ Bowersock (1990) 1–13; Trombley (1993–94) *passim*; Whitby (1991).

But there is also evidence for the decline of paganism amongst the local curial class in such traditional cities as Aphrodisias and Athens towards the end of the 5th c., which is also when Christian governors of the Islands begin to appear in our sources.⁸⁰ The last decades of the 4th c. and the beginning of the 5th were probably a watershed for the end of public paganism across the wider Aegean region. The reign of Julian had laid down a short-lived barrage against increasingly hostile imperial policies against the old religion—which until then largely lacked an effective mechanism of enforcement. Julian had offered financial support to the temples, after they had suffered a long period of attrition and neglect, through newly-appointed provincial governors and local figures, who were zealous pagans. The removal of divine images from numerous sanctuaries in the eastern Aegean (including Lindos and the Heraion) could be connected to the imperial anti-pagan edicts known from the end of the 4th c. onwards. Yet in more isolated cities of Asia Minor such as Aezanis, Mylasa, Hierapolis, Stratonicea, Philadelphia and Aphrodisias, pagan sites show evidence for repairs and remained in use even until the mid-5th c.⁸¹

Unfortunately, the state of the evidence hardly permits us to recognise clear-cut regional differences regarding Christianisation in any region. So we must restrict ourselves to more general statements. Christianisation was probably slow, though the south-eastern Aegean islands, at least the major ones, may have accepted the new religion earlier than the rest. Moreover, being located along the major maritime routes between Constantinople and the prosperous eastern provinces, the island communities of the eastern Aegean enjoyed high connectivity and remarkable economic growth during Late Antiquity, something that is less evident in mainland Greece (except Corinth) and the Cyclades. Yet the absence of hagiographical sources and major pilgrimage and *martyria* sites at the city of Rhodes may indicate a rather weaker Christian identity for urban society in this region compared to cities such as Corinth, Gortyn, and certainly Ephesus, where a vibrant Christian sacred landscape was well-established by that period.⁸² It is

⁸⁰ Decline of paganism in curial class: Trombley (1993–94) 1.307–28, 2. 52–73.

⁸¹ Harl (2001) 306; Pont (2004) 552–53; Talloen and Vercauteren in this volume.

⁸² In trying to explain the silence of the sources, we could say that this matter is heavily dependent on the dissemination of hagiographical sources from the Middle Byzantine period. On the other hand, the total absence of passing references to martyrs by contemporary writers is significant in its own right. The only exceptions are the martyrs Isidoros and Myropes on Chios: Mullen (2004) 92.

also an indication of the somewhat peripheral role of Rhodes and the other island cities, compared to other Aegean *metropoleis* (e.g. Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Sardis).

We must not assume that the countryside was isolated and backwards-looking, either religiously or culturally. Rural areas of the islands show a predominantly Christianised landscape by the first half of the 6th c.⁸³ The societies of the eastern Aegean islands may not have been greatly different from those of the rural areas and the hinterland of the larger cities of western Asia Minor. Since both regions show the Church making efforts to eradicate paganism and convert the rural population during the late 5th and 6th centuries, we might be seeing parallel developments. The islands' involvement in economic and cultural networks with their nearby continental coasts most probably remained intense in Late Antiquity; in addition, the close socio-economic interaction of the south-eastern Aegean with the centres of eastern Christianity (Palestine, Egypt) and with Constantinople may have played a role in the formation process of their Christian identity. The same impression is given by the evidence regarding the spread of early monasticism across the Aegean region in which the eastern Aegean and Crete offer most of the otherwise scant examples attested.⁸⁴ One could therefore argue for a distinction in terms of social change between the western and eastern Aegean and between coastal and inland areas, yet without minimising the importance of independent local dynamics in this process. For such a fragmented and diverse landscape, we can speak only in terms of varying cultural sub-regions, there being little homogeneity.

CONCLUSIONS

The case-studies discussed have highlighted major features of the late history of public paganism, added new material to this subject, and offered crucial insights into local society. Yet the serious limitations of our sources coupled with the complexity of the subject allow for only a partial understanding of the late history of paganism and the growth of Christianity in the Province of the Islands. Although public pagan-

⁸³ Deligianakis (2006) 33–72.

⁸⁴ See above.

ism did not survive the 4th c., the demise of traditional religion was clearly slower than Christian sources generally claim, since Christian authorities were still struggling during the 5th and 6th c. to win the hearts of the island populations, many of whom apparently continued to believe in the power of the pagan gods and their oracles.

Only a small number of pagan temples were definitely reused as Christian churches, and there do not seem to be chronologies of these events before the (mid-) 5th c.⁸⁵ This can be explained by a change in Christian attitudes toward these sites and possibly also by the effect of imperial legislation. No evidence for systematic Christian iconoclasm has been recognised in the region, and the lack of accounts of martyrdom in these islands supports the impression that religious conflict and persecution did not characterise these small communities.⁸⁶ Furthermore, a degree of continuity in social and cult associations that transcended the difference between pagan and Christian may be envisaged in the cases of Ikaria and possibly Gyroula; the idea of a peaceful transition to Christianity, that the Ikaria inscription advertised, could have a bearing on the process of Christianisation of the islands, particularly once the final victory of the Cross appeared secure.

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⁸⁵ Cf. Bayliss (2004) 50–57 and Talloen and Vercauteren *in this volume*.

⁸⁶ Two cases of Christian iconoclasm against pagan statuary at Rhodes are discussed in Deligiannakis (2008).

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THE FATE OF TEMPLES IN LATE ANTIQUE ANATOLIA

Peter Talloen and Lies Vercauteren

Abstract

When Christianity rose to prominence during the 4th c. temples were no longer the vibrant centres of ritual activity they had once been. A precise chronology for the last phases of temples in Asia Minor cannot be established with the limited evidence we possess. Yet, the examples presented here do allow an approximate pattern to be laid down. Furthermore, they demonstrate that the fate of temples in Late Antiquity comprised more than just destruction or conversion to churches. That said, the preservation of the sacred landscape through *in situ* conversion of temples did play a crucial role in the Christianisation of late antique Asia Minor.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 4th c. A.D., Asia Minor was still a largely pagan region, with relatively small centres of Christianity, which had yet to leave a significant mark on the religious landscape.¹ This situation was to change dramatically by the beginning of the 5th c., as the result of the rise of Christianity after the conversion of Constantine and the imperial legislation that followed, which ordered the abolition of sacrifice, the closure of sanctuaries and the confiscation of their properties,² and the building boom of monumental Christian places of worship. Unfortunately, the fate of pagan temples in this crucial age of religious transformation is little known.

The functioning of pagan temples in the 3rd c. is well-attested in Asia Minor through ongoing constructions and repairs, as well as cultic

¹ On the state of paganism and Christianity in general in the 3rd and 4th centuries see Lane Fox (1986), Trombley (1993–94) and Fowden (1998); for Asia Minor in particular see Mitchell (1993), Trombley (1993–94) 2. 52–133 and recently Pont (2004).

² This legislation was compiled in the *Codex Theodosianus*.

activities taking place there. A first example is the *Artemision* of Ephesus. After the destruction of this temple by the earthquake of A.D. 262 and the subsequent pillage of the city by the Goths, the *cella* was repaired with *spolia* from other derelict buildings, indicating the continuing importance of this sanctuary.³ In Miletos, there were still some constructions being added to the Temple of Dionysus in the 3rd c. A.D.,⁴ while in the territory of the city, building activities are attested at the large sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma.⁵ Furthermore, numerous inscriptions attest to the continuation of cultic activity, for example the celebration of religious festivals and the organisation of games, which clearly continued to be popular in this period. As these festivities focused on the sanctuaries, they are indirect proof of the continuing role of temples as centres of public worship in 3rd c. A.D. Asia Minor.⁶ Finally, locally minted bronze coinage with its profusion of types featuring religious symbols, cult statues, temples and festivals offers additional testimony to the extent and depth of pagan civic worship during the 3rd c.⁷

While such evidence is found throughout the whole of Anatolia for the 3rd c., this is no longer the case for the 4th c. We have hardly any sources for this last phase in the history of temples as the core of public cult in Asia Minor.⁸ The evidence for the end of the temples is scarce and difficult to interpret. Except for a small number of recently excavated sites such as Aphrodisias and Sagalassos, the archaeological record has not been consistently preserved,⁹ and with the traditional elements of pagan cult now being outlawed (cf *infra*) the problem of

³ Bammer and Muss (1996) 60–61; Muss (2007) 244–45. The small Temple of Hadrian and Artemis on the Curetes Street was also damaged by the earthquake and repaired *ca.* A.D. 300, receiving statues of the members of the Tetrarchy (Thür (2003) 260 and n.12, 264).

⁴ Müller-Wiener (1977–78) 97–101.

⁵ Wiegand (1941) 42; Tuchelt (1973) 110–13.

⁶ On the popularity of festivals and games in 2nd and 3rd c. Asia Minor see Mitchell (1990) and Roueché (1993).

⁷ Harl (1987) 52–94.

⁸ Some cities still provide indications for the continuation of temple cult in the 4th c., such as the festival of Zeus Panamareus in the territory of Carian Stratonikeia (Şahin (1981–82) 21, 310) and the public dedications to Aphrodite at nearby Aphrodisias, persisting into the 5th c. (Roueché (1989) 90–91, 153–54). Yet, the statement by K. Harl that many cities of Roman Anatolia still presented a pagan image in their architecture and public worship as late as the mid-5th c. (Harl (2001) 306) has no archaeological basis.

⁹ In earlier excavations the focus was placed on unravelling the art and architecture of the temple as it survived within the church, as exemplified by the Temple of

recognizing pagan cult on the ground is self-evident. Consequently, no positive archaeological evidence¹⁰ can be presented that indicates a continuation of temple cult in Late Antiquity anywhere in Anatolia.¹¹

It is possible, however, to outline the general fate of temples once they fell out of use, through literary sources and in particular the archaeological analysis of a number of well-studied sites in the region.¹² The different fates that could befall a temple in Late Antiquity provide us with some idea of how they were perceived in Asia Minor, both before and after their closure.¹³

THE DECLINE OF THE TEMPLES: DECAY AND VIOLENCE?

Several elements influenced the fate of the temples in Late Antiquity. A lack of financial backing must have played a significant role in the state of the sanctuaries even before they became a potential target for Christians and Christian emperors. The construction and maintenance of such buildings was usually funded by wealthy individuals, or in some cases by imperial officials. Given the religious persuasion of the 4th c.

Rome and Augustus at Ancyra, and the Temple of Zeus at Aizanoi (see Bayliss (2004) 6 and 50).

¹⁰ Literary sources, though, provide some indications for continuing ritual at temple sites in the 4th c. Existing temples in Lydia, for instance, were apparently restored by Chrysanthius, the high priest of Lydia appointed by the emperor Julian as part of his effort to revitalise paganism (Eunap. *VS.* 501; see also Foss (1976) 28).

¹¹ The end of temple cult in Late Antiquity did not, however, create a religious void which was filled by Christianity as claimed by some (see for instance Bagnall (1988) on late antique Egypt). Traditional religious practices continued well into the late antique period, mostly away from the temple in such private contexts as the domestic sphere (MacMullen (1997) 61–63, 106–107), or at sacred locations in the countryside (Caseau (2004) 114–17, 134–36). On the presence of a polytheist community at Aphrodisias in the 5th c. see Roueché (1989) 85–96, 153–55. For the situation in late antique Corinth and Greece see Rothaus (2000).

¹² The afterlife of temples differed regionally, depending on such factors as the strength and longevity of non-Christian cults—generally thought to have persisted longer in Greece (Gregory (1986); Rothaus (2000); Sanders (2005)), the rate of Christianization of the governing classes—who remained explicitly pagan in Rome well into the 5th c. (Brown (1961); Fowden (1998) 551–52), and the fanaticism or tolerance of bishops and abbots—who were reportedly very militant in Syro-Palestine as exemplified by bishop Porphyry at Gaza (*V. Porph.*) and bishop Marcellus at Apamea (Trombley (1993–94) 1. 122–29 and 2. 283–89).

¹³ This paper is indebted to the work of Richard Bayliss whose monograph on the archaeology of temple conversion is a reference for all studies on temple conversion, in Asia Minor and the rest of the Roman empire (Bayliss 2004).

emperors, it is doubtful that imperial funds would have been used for the upkeep of an edifice for which the purpose was to house a pagan cult. Responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the temples would thus have fallen almost completely on affluent citizens. However, the 4th c. saw a decline of the curial order and of elite euergetism,¹⁴ and the expenditure that did occur was increasingly directed away from the urban temples. The growth of villas, for example, represented a new focus of financial interest and expenditure, and a new mode of consumption and display.¹⁵ Furthermore, the increasing public profile of Christianity and the conversion of the elite made the Church a more attractive focus for benefactors.¹⁶ As a result of this lack of elite support many of the sanctuaries will already have been in a rather bad state in the 4th c. A.D.¹⁷

The legal status of the temples also deteriorated sharply during the 4th c.¹⁸ Temples and other religious buildings attested to the vitality of the pagan community and its right to practise its religion and publicise its cult. This is why they were targeted by the Christian imperial authorities who wished to control the religious affiliation of the population they ruled.¹⁹ From the reign of Constantine onwards, laws were enacted which ordered the abolition of pagan practices, and while the degree to which such laws were enforced remains highly uncertain they did have some impact. All temples were instructed to be closed for the first time in 356, which apparently prompted Christians in

¹⁴ Due to the reorganization of the empire by Diocletian and the resulting centralization, in which the institutions of civic self-government in the 4th c. came to be seen as nothing more than pieces of administrative machinery used in the collection of taxes (Liebeschuetz (1992) 12–13; Ward-Perkins (1998) 373–82), it became less attractive for the provincial elite to become involved in local affairs and to assume local offices like the civic priesthoods that covered much of the religious expenditure.

¹⁵ Roueché (2000) 581. See, for example, the large urban mansion at Pisidian Sagalassos (Waelkens *et al.* (2006) 219 and 221).

¹⁶ Jones (1966) 28–36; Brands (2003) 7–8.

¹⁷ Moreover, rather than imagining a homogenous pagan world before Christianization, Caseau rightly points out that we should picture flourishing cultic centres beside a number of deserted shrines left to decay. While some cults were popular at the end of the 3rd c., others had already lost their appeal and declined (Caseau (1999) 25). The *Artemision* of Sardis, for example, was apparently abandoned in the troubles of the 3rd c., to be covered with alluvium from the neighbouring streams by the middle of the 4th c., though much of the evidence is not very clear (Foss (1976) 28, 37–38).

¹⁸ For an overview of imperial legislation against pagan cult practices see Bayliss (2004) 8–31, who underlines that the imperial laws themselves did not directly determine the demise of the temples (Bayliss (2004) 73).

¹⁹ Caseau (1999) 23.

many places to attack temples.²⁰ This may be reflected in the claims of Julian and Libanius that temples were destroyed under Constantius II, although both writers are far from unbiased.²¹ During his brief reign Julian commanded the restoration of all damaged temples at the expense of the destroyers, which again points at some violence towards pagan monuments.²² The death of Julian initially saw a period of imperial toleration under Valentinianus and Valens. But in 391, after already having decreed the confiscation of all income-producing property from temples, Theodosius sealed their fate by forbidding the sacrifice of animals, the worship of statues and the visiting of shrines for these purposes,²³ leaving city temples to decay or linger on as public 'ornaments'.²⁴

The temples and shrines, which had once sacralised the landscape, were now considered to be polluting the earth. However, the relationship between the legal status of paganism and the evidence for Christian violence against pagan installations is complex. Although frowned upon by the authorities because it rubbed against the grain of social order and discipline, that some violence did occur is beyond dispute. As Libanius complains, attacks on temples could easily take place without legal sanction if imperial officials were prepared to turn a blind eye, or, in some cases, even sponsored them.²⁵

Nevertheless, tracing temple destruction has proved difficult in our surviving evidence. While damage to masonry beyond what would be expected to have resulted from a collapse is generally attributed to Christians, a number of scholars, like Spieser and Bayliss, have argued that Christians in general rarely attacked pagan temples while they were still in use, but rather occupied them after they were

²⁰ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.4; Meier (1996) 367.

²¹ *Julian Or.* 7. 228bc; *Lib. Or.* 1. 27, 18. 114–15, 62. 8.

²² *Julian Ep.*, 41.

²³ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.11 and 16.10.20. Even if the laws themselves may not have been very efficient, as seems to be confirmed by the fact that they had to be repeated throughout the 5th c. (Harl (1990) 7), they did effectively put an end to any funding of the temples, and terminated their role as centres of public worship, which stripped them of an important reason for their existence.

²⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 and 16.10.18 (in A.D. 399). The order to the prefect of the East in 435 to destroy the temples (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25) was subject to the consent of local magistrates, and so did not involve all temples (Frantz (1965) 200; Meier (1996) 368). Additionally, urban temples were protected so long as they did not form the focus of ritual activity (Bayliss (2004) 19).

²⁵ *Lib. Or.* 49.3; Fowden (1978) 63; Fowden (1998) 549–51.

abandoned.²⁶ Certainly, there is little real evidence in Asia Minor for the actual destruction of pagan sanctuaries, unlike in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, where we have the well-documented examples of the temples of Zeus at Apamea, Marnas at Gaza and the *Sarapeion* at Alexandria respectively.²⁷

The cases of temples that allegedly suffered religiously motivated violence are difficult to prove. In Pergamon, the 'Red Hall', the sanctuary for Egyptian gods, was partly destroyed by fire in the late 4th or early 5th c. Unfortunately, it is unknown whether this destruction was intentional or not.²⁸

The sanctuary of Men Askaenos near Pisidian Antioch does appear to have suffered a violent demise. The votive steles inside the *temenos* were smashed, while the temple itself was completely dismantled. According to the scholars working at the site, this all happened at the end of the 4th c.,²⁹ but this date is not confirmed and so the context and motivation for the destruction cannot be established. One alternative explanation is that the temple was dismantled and its remains used within some new construction within the city; any riotous activity (if this took place) would then have been limited to the mutilation of statuary and the destruction of votive steles.³⁰

At Sagalassos, the poorly known sanctuary of Demeter and Kore may have undergone a similar fate. So far only a 2nd c. A.D. dedicatory inscription of the sanctuary has been retrieved (fig. 1), found on the city's upper agora where it was reused as cover stone of a sewer.³¹ The Christian acclamation εἰς Θεός ('One God') was carved on the mutilated dedicatory relief, something that is associated with desacralisation and was common in the late 4th or early 5th c.³² Both the mutilated relief and the inscription show a vigorous Christian reaction to

²⁶ Spieser (1976) 311–12; Bayliss (2004) 18.

²⁷ The written sources relating to these destructions are discussed by Trombley (1993–94) 1.110, 114–16, and 123.

²⁸ Nohlen (1998) 99.

²⁹ Ramsay (1912) 226 and (1913) 290; Mitchell and Waelkens (1998) 85–86.

³⁰ Moreover, since the excavators observed the blocking of the cella door, it is most probable that the temple had been closed for some time before its dismantlement and is therefore less likely to have attracted a violent fanatical mob than a still-functioning temple (Bayliss (2004) 24 and n.184, 56).

³¹ Waelkens *et al.* (1997) 147 and 149, fig. 67.

³² Trombley (1993–94) 1.120–21 and 2. 252. The phrase was a liturgical feature of temple conversion during the 4th to 6th centuries (Trombley (2004) 72).



Fig. 1 A limestone votive column with a dedicatory inscription from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Sagalassos (inv. n° SA94UA/1557 and 1559) reused as a cover stone for a sewer on the Upper Agora. The relief was mutilated and the Christian acclamation εἰς Θεός ('One God') was inscribed below. (Sagalassos archive)

the sanctuary, and might even indicate the violent destruction of the temple, but such a hypothesis as yet still remains unproven.

Other archaeological evidence may also point to Christian aggression towards pagan monuments as a Church enriched by imperial patronage and swollen with recent converts began to achieve a greater urban profile and to refute publicly the pagan *mores* of their cities. In the second half of the 4th c. the emblem of the mosaic floor decorating the Neon library at Sagalassos, and featuring the departure of Achilles for the Trojan war, was destroyed while the rest of the floor remained intact, after which the building was set on fire. This deliberate action has been interpreted as an ideologically motivated destruction, possibly carried out by a Christian mob untouched by *paideia*.³³

Overall, however, such instances of destruction appear to have been the exception rather than the rule in Asia Minor, as in other regions of the empire.³⁴ Therefore, when we imagine the destruction of a temple, we should think more in terms of demolition or dismantlement. A famous example is the as yet undiscovered Temple of Asklepios at Aigai in Cilicia. Although Eusebius states that: 'the shrine was utterly destroyed, so that no trace remained there of the former madness'—something that had been ordered by the emperor Constantine because it had been a place of anti-Christian propaganda—the sanctuary continued to receive pilgrims in search of a cure in the 4th and 5th centuries.³⁵ This, together with the fact that Julian ordered the local bishop to give back the columns he had taken from the temple to build his church,³⁶ implies that the sanctuary may have only been partly demolished through the removal of its colonnades, but was certainly not totally destroyed. Besides, the destruction of a well-built temple was

³³ Waelkens *et al.* (2000); Waelkens and Talloen (in press). In the same period, those other institutions of learning, the *gymnasia*, were abandoned in many cities and systematically dismantled (Yegül (1992) 313; Roueché (2000) 580–81). See for instance the 'east-gymnasium' of Ephesus, the site of a 5th c. basilica (Foss (1979) 83; Scherrer (1995) 23–24) and the gymnasium at Aizanoi (Rheidt (2003) 243). This could again be interpreted as anti-pagan for it was in these buildings that urban youths were educated in pagan culture and became acquainted with the Greek myths, gods and heroes (Yegül (1992) 24). According to some scholars, however, the *gymnasia* fell into disuse not because of Christianity but because of a changing mentality, becoming 'socially irrelevant monuments' (Brands (2003) 17).

³⁴ Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 49; Bayliss (2004) 16–25.

³⁵ This statement by Eusebius was repeated by Sozomen (*Hist. eccl.* 117.2.5.5); Cascau (2004) 121–22.

³⁶ Zonar. *Epitome historiarum* 13.12.30–34.

difficult to achieve, as it was no easy task to dismantle well-bonded masonry, requiring specialised workers rather than an angry mob.³⁷

Furthermore, while some temples may have been razed to the ground as part of the Christian desacralisation, most were simply deconsecrated through the removal of the cult statues and other pagan imagery.³⁸ Since sacrifice animated the god resident within the cult statue, its removal eliminated all meaning from future sacrifices because the symbolic and real presence of the god was gone.³⁹ To expel the demonic spirits, crosses could be carved onto the building material.⁴⁰ Such crosses are attested, for instance, in the Temple of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos, in the *Artemision* at Sardis, and in the *Letoon* near Xanthos.⁴¹ Other temples were closed by blocking their doorways, as illustrated by temple N4 at Termessos.⁴²

Those temples were apparently allowed to linger on until a better use for them was found, either as sources of material for new constructions or as the foundations for new secular or Christian buildings.

TEMPLES AS QUARRIES

After their closure, an almost immediate process of stone-robbing began at a number of temple sites, allowing the practical reuse of their architectural elements. The sanctuary of the deified Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos began to be dismantled by the early 5th c. This city is still mentioned as a *neokoros*—temple-warden of the imperial cult—during the reign of Constantine, which may well imply that its imperial shrines were still in use at this time, but the test excavations of 2003 and 2004 demonstrated that this sanctuary went out of use in the late 4th c. A.D. Although the emperor remained a sacred person in Christianity as the representative of God on earth, no building could

³⁷ See Caseau (2004) 130.

³⁸ For a definition of Christian deconsecration see Trombley (1993–94) 1. 245.

³⁹ Harl (1990) 21.

⁴⁰ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25; Caillet (1996) 196. Hahn (2001) 271, 274–75.

⁴¹ Sagalassos: Rott (1908) 14–16; Sardis: Foss (1976) 49; Xanthos: Hansen and Le Roy (1976) 326 and Foss (1994) 13.

⁴² Lanckoronski (1892) 43–44, 90–91. In the history of a temple, the blocking of its doorway signalled a temporary phase before it moved to another state, either through dismantlement or conversion. Archaeologically it is therefore rarely detectable (Bayliss (2004) 9).

be dedicated to his exclusive cult by the reign of Theodosius I. Once cult activity ceased, the Corinthian *peripteros* and the surrounding Ionic portico of the sanctuary were dismantled for reuse in the unidentified encroaching structures within the *temenos* (fig. 2), as well as in the Late Roman fortifications and the Christian basilica E1 (cf *infra*).⁴³

At Ephesus, the Flavian temple overlooking the state agora and dedicated to the cult of the emperors, suffered the same fate some time after A.D. 380. After an earthquake devastated the city in the later 4th c., a great restoration program was initiated, yet no funds were available anymore to repair the city's great temples and some, like the Temple of the *Sebastoi*, found new roles providing material for the much needed restorations. Parts of the sanctuary's northern façade were reused as support for the southern hall of the *Tetragonos agora*.⁴⁴ Likewise, the city's *Olympieion*, a giant peripteral temple built in honour of Hadrian—which was most probably destroyed as a result of the same disaster—became a quarry and saw all building material removed up to the level of the foundations, before it was gradually covered by sediments.⁴⁵ The southern portico of its *temenos* became the location of the Mary-church (cf *infra*). At Aizanoi in Phrygia, the Temple of Artemis was systematically dismantled and used for the construction of a colonnaded street between 395 and 408.⁴⁶ A final example, the *Artemision* at Sardis, which had a small church built within its precinct (cf *infra*) also became a quarry after the temple was closed; building material was

⁴³ Talloen and Waelkens (2004) 177–80; Talloen and Poblome (2005); Talloen *et al.* (2006). A somewhat similar fate appears to have befallen the *Sebasteion* at Aphrodisias. While the temple at the east end of the complex had been completely dismantled in Late Antiquity, the two long three-storied porticoes to the north and south that frame the processional space leading to the temple were converted to public use, with their lower levels turned into shops (Smith (1987) 95; Harl (2001) 312).

⁴⁴ Scherrer (1995) 19–20; Thür (2003) 263 and n.32, 269.

⁴⁵ Karwiese (1989) 17–20 and (1995) 313–15; Thür (2003) 263. According to Scherrer the building blocks were not reused elsewhere but burnt on the spot in lime kilns (Scherrer (1995) 24).

⁴⁶ Rheidt (2003) 241–42 who points out, on the basis of the close sequence of the two events, that the dismantlement of the temple and its reuse in the construction of the colonnaded street may have occurred as a direct result of the Theodosian legislation. Moreover, the Temple of Artemis would have been singled out for spoliation by the Christians because the goddess was assimilated with Kybele, the main goddess of the region who had to be removed from the religious landscape (Rheidt (2003) 242, 244).

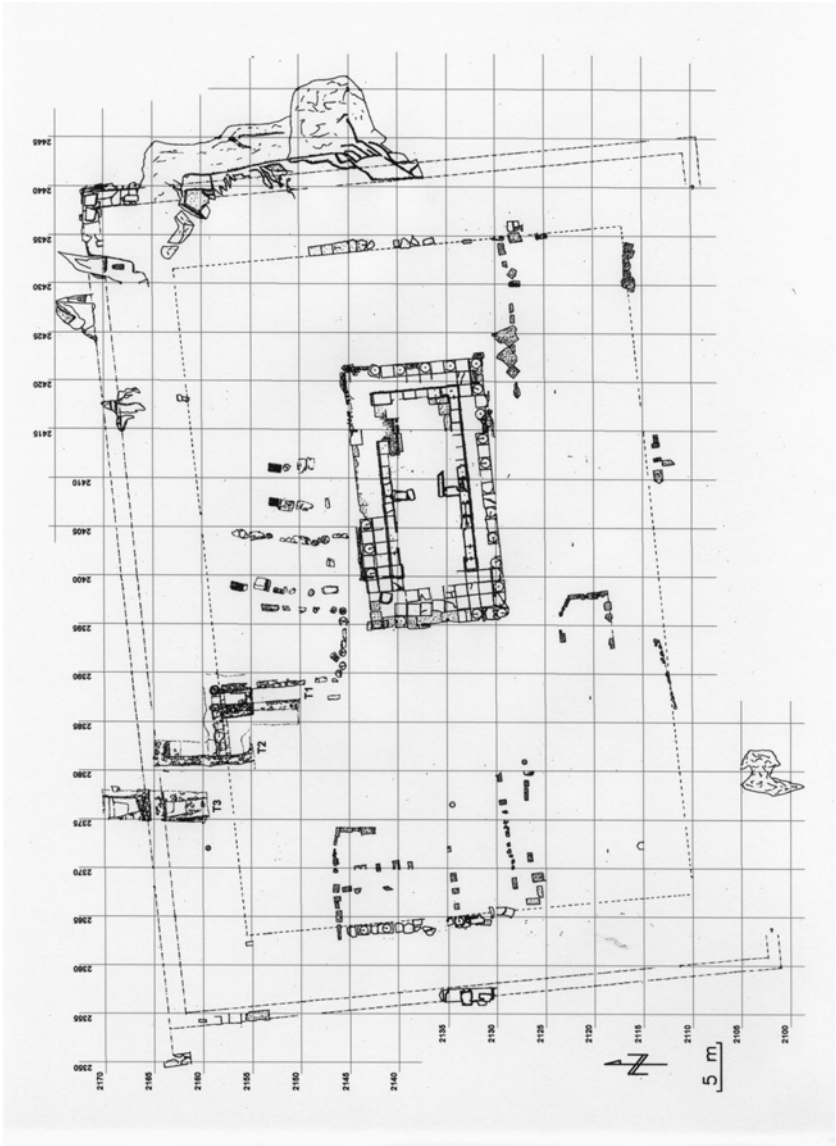


Fig. 2 Plan of the sanctuary of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos, with the encroaching structures built from *spolia* of the temple exposed in the trenches in the northwest part of the *temenos*. (Sagalassos archive)

removed and limestone was burned on the spot. This work may have begun in the 4th c. and continued until the early 7th c.⁴⁷

This dilapidation of the temples was not so much a matter of violent Christianisation as argued by some,⁴⁸ but rather a simple matter of economics. The availability of cut stone for new building projects at these abandoned sites promoted construction work and urban renewal, as we see from a law of 397 which permitted the reuse of the material from destroyed temples for the restorations of roads, bridges and aqueducts.⁴⁹ At the moment it is impossible to tell whether the dismantling of temples for such reuse was the result of gradual decay or decisive action. The plundering of monuments is often a long process that never reaches a clear end. At the Temple of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos the demolition of the temple was never completed, and the building was seemingly pillaged *ad hoc* as the need arose.⁵⁰

TEMPLE CONVERSION: SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS

Not all pagan sanctuaries were left to a fate of decay and stone robbery. Some temples continued to remain part of the cityscape but in new forms and performing new roles, both secular and religious.

⁴⁷ Foss (1976) 48–50; Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 193. Other lesser known pagan shrines in the city were also being demolished during the 4th c. which has led the excavators to endorse the statement of Eunapius that only traces remained of pagan temples by *ca.* A.D. 375 (Eunap. *VS.* 503; Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 194).

⁴⁸ According to Kinney, the antagonism between pagans and Christians exacerbated a general tendency to pillage disused buildings for *spolia*, and churches all over the empire soon began to be constructed with pieces of destroyed temples (Kinney (1999) 718). The wide variety of building work using temple *spolia* mentioned in this paper (fortifications and encroaching structures at Sagalassos; a colonnaded street at Aizanoi; an agora at Ephesus) already suggests that this spoliation was less a matter of ideology than of simple economics. Moreover, the reuse of the old for the new was certainly not a concept that originated in Late Antiquity (see Rheidt (2003) 241; Bayliss (2004) 32).

⁴⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.36.

⁵⁰ The building blocks placed around the temple were not, though, laid out in an orderly fashion in preparation for use elsewhere, as had been claimed before (Waelkens *et al.* (1990) 190), but reused in unidentified structures encroaching upon the former *temenos* (Talloe and Poblome (2005)).

Secular

In several cities, smaller temples were simply left standing and tolerated as monuments to the past.⁵¹ Again there are several examples from Pisidia. At the small city of Adada, the Temple of Zeus Sarapis, that of Trajan and the sanctuary of the divine emperors (fig. 3), comprising three of the four architecturally known pagan shrines, continued to dominate the city. At Termessos, the same can be said of the three *naoi* in the city centre, namely N2, N3 and N4.⁵² Likewise several smaller pagan cult buildings remained standing in cities throughout Asia Minor, such as the Corinthian *prostylos* temple at Patara in Lycia and the semicircular podium-temple of the lunar god Men at the end of the colonnaded street at Side.⁵³ These instances suggest that the attempts to preserve temples as civic ornaments through imperial legislation appears to have been partly successful. The same emperors who ordered the closure of sanctuaries and the abolition of sacrifices in fact encouraged respect for pagan temples as monuments of artistic and historical value, and advocated their reuse to embellish the urban landscape.⁵⁴ Already Constantius II, although sometimes seen as a militant Christian emperor, proclaimed protective measures for pagan cultic buildings.⁵⁵ Through this policy of architectural conservation the

⁵¹ It cannot be ruled out, of course, that they may have accommodated some function that is barely or not detectable in the archaeological record.

⁵² Adada: Büyükkolancı (1998) 34–39 (*Traianeion*), 45–51 (Zeus Sarapis), 52–59 (Divine Emperors). Of the fourth temple, dedicated to Aphrodite and the divine emperors, only scanty remains have been found to the north of the agora (Büyükkolancı (1998) 32–33). Termessos: Lanckoronksi (1892) 43–44, 90–91 (*Naos* 4), 50–51, 92 (*Naos* 3), 53, 88–90 (*Naos* 2).

⁵³ Patara temple: Işık (2000) 117–21. Side temple: Mansel (1978) 135–42. Since its remains were found in relatively good condition by the excavators, Foss justifiably concludes that the temple was still standing in Late Antiquity (Foss (1996) 39). These examples clearly refute the statement by Bayliss that few small temples survived in southern Asia Minor (Bayliss (2004) 104).

⁵⁴ From the laws one can infer an appreciation of the temples' cultural value, expressed at first in attempts to keep them open for non sacrificial purposes (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3, 7, 8, 10–12) and subsequently in decrees protecting their buildings and ornaments (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15, 18). The same is not true for temples in the countryside, which were ordered to be destroyed (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.16). Since they did not fall under public building preservation decrees aimed at preventing the denudation of the urban fabric, extra-mural and rural temples are much more likely to have ended up as *spolia* (see Bayliss (2004) 21). On the fate of rural temples see Cáscau (2004).

⁵⁵ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3.



Fig. 3 2nd c. Temple of the Divine Emperors at Adada
(picture taken by P. Talloen).

imperial authorities hoped to maintain not only the monuments of the past, but also the civic spirit that helped to produce them.⁵⁶

Temples, which were among the inalienable components of the city's image, had to be preserved. But preservation often required adaptation to new public purposes and contexts, in short reuse. A number of temples and shrines acquired a new, secular function. Here we can cite two examples from Sagalassos. Excavations in and around the Late Hellenistic Doric *distylos in antis* temple—probably the sanctuary of the city's chief deity, Zeus—indicated that the *naos* was converted into a watchtower and incorporated into the late fortifications at the very beginning of the 5th c. (fig. 4).⁵⁷ The quality of the work does not show excessive haste in construction, which makes it unlikely that the temple had been deliberately destroyed under some sudden threat. It is easier to assume that the materials were available because the building in question was already closed and given up for spoliation.⁵⁸ A second example is the Early Imperial *tychaion* on the upper agora of Sagalassos, which consisted of a square curved canopy roof supported by four columns on top of pedestals. This construction was converted into a dynastic monument to the rulers of the Late Roman empire, Valentinian II, Gratian and a female member of the dynasty, possibly Constantia, the wife of the latter emperor, but was eventually dedicated to Flavia Eudoxia, the wife of emperor Arcadius and a militant supporter of Christianity. The empress (A.D. 400–404) would thus replace the goddess Tyche as the protectress of the city.⁵⁹

A similar dynastic destiny was in store for the small Temple of Artemis and Hadrian on the Curetes Street of Ephesus. After its restoration in the later 4th c. the shrine appears to have adopted a new role as a monument in celebration of the Christian emperors and city founders. An image of the emperor Theodosius' father replaced one of the statues of the Tetrarchy, and a frieze allegedly depicting the

⁵⁶ Alchermes (1994) 168.

⁵⁷ During this transformation, part of the original entablature and roof were removed and the interior of the building was drastically changed. Along the long sides eight supports for pillars were built which probably carried the wooden gallery of the tower (Waelkens (1993) 9–12).

⁵⁸ Loots *et al.* (2000) 616; Waelkens and Talloen (in press).

⁵⁹ Talloen and Waelkens (2004) 188–91. Given the fact that it was also the empress Eudoxia who obtained imperial permission for Porphyry to destroy the Temple of Marnas at Gaza (*V. Porph.* 35–50, 63–65, 69–70), the honours at Sagalassos may perhaps also hint at Christianization with imperial support.



Fig. 4 Late Hellenistic Doric temple at Sagalassos as part of the early 5th c. urban defences (Sagalassos archive).

emperor as well as a reused frieze depicting a foundation legend, were incorporated into the building, seemingly promoting Theodosius as the new founder of Ephesus.⁶⁰

Religious

The second type of sanctuary that continued to be occupied under a new guise has received greater attention from modern scholars, often within the framework of pagan-Christian conflict, namely the temples that were converted into Christian churches. Although ideological considerations will certainly have played some role in the conversion process, in the vast majority of cases the transformation occurred as a matter of expediency, based on the availability of land and materials, and the potential for the exploitation of an existing urban-religious framework.

According to the criteria of Richard Bayliss, who developed a new methodology for the study of temple conversion,⁶¹ two different categories of converted temples can be distinguished: those converted directly and those indirectly.

1) *Indirect Conversion*

In the case of indirect conversion, no standing material from the temple in question was reused, but a church was constructed within the *temenos* of the sanctuary or by reusing parts of the temple as *spolia*.

Churches constructed within the *temenos* or sacred precinct are called *temenos-churches*.⁶² Some examples from Asia Minor include the temples of the two main deities at Side, Apollo and Athena. Inside their shared sacred precinct, at the end of the colonnaded street on the southernmost point of the peninsula overlooking the sea, a basilica was built in the (early) 5th c., slightly to the east of the temples which

⁶⁰ Scherrer (1995) 21; Thür (2003) 264–65. This example seems to have been part of a whole conservation project of honorific and other monuments along the Curetes Street in late antique Ephesus (see Thür (2003) 270–73). See also Pont (2004) 558–59 who argues for the identification of the building as a *tychaion*, something that allegedly would have contributed to its survival.

⁶¹ Bayliss (2004) 7. Helen Saradi-Mendelovici already pointed to the need to distinguish between the use of building material for churches and the establishment of Christian ecclesiastical structures on the sites of pagan sanctuaries (Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 52), yet she did not differentiate between churches erected within the sacred precinct and *in situ* conversion.

⁶² Bayliss (2004) 35, 44–46.

were preserved within the *atrium* or courtyard of this church.⁶³ Both the size and positioning of the *atrium* appears to be dictated by the temple remains (fig. 5). While the north temple is enclosed completely by the courtyard, the south temple lies across it and is respected by the south wall of the *atrium*. According to Bayliss this probably indicates that part or all of the *peripteros* was reused as a monumental *propylaion* to the basilica.⁶⁴

The small church M on the site of the *Artemision* of Sardis was attached to the south-east corner of the temple podium, and can therefore also be regarded as an example of this category rather than an instance of direct conversion. It too reused part of the *peristasis*, namely the south *pteron* of the temple, as a kind of courtyard. The church was a simple apsidal hall, probably intended to sanctify the Artemis precinct and to provide a funerary chapel for the cemetery established within the former *temenos*. The construction has been attributed to the 4th c., an exceptionally early date.⁶⁵

The *Olympieion* at Ephesus is a further example of a *temenos*-church. The church of Mary was originally thought to have been erected within the southern tripartite portico of the imperial sanctuary in the second half of the 4th c. This transformation has recently been redated to the period between A.D. 426 and 431, that is the years immediately prior to the Council of Ephesus, and therefore most probably in preparation for this council. At that time, the former imperial sanctuary is believed to have been in ruins (cf *supra*).⁶⁶ Re-examination of the site and its stratigraphy has revealed that the original church was only a modest and possibly even temporary building, which in the late 5th c. was replaced by the more monumental 'column church'.⁶⁷

A fourth example is the *Letoon* complex near Xanthos, seat of the worship of Leto and federal sanctuary of the Lycian league into which the cities of the region had been organised. From the 4th c. onwards,

⁶³ Mansel (1978) 121–35, 257–66. Although Mansel only gives a broad 5th c. date, Krautheimer (Krautheimer (1986) 108) proposed a date as early as A.D. 400. Recent analysis of the capitals of the church suggests that it may have been built as late as the 6th c., though the building may well have had more than one period of construction (see Foss (1996) 39 and n.179).

⁶⁴ Bayliss (2004) 40.

⁶⁵ Foss (1976) 48–49; Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 193–95. The excavation technique that led to the discovery of the numismatic evidence for this date has been questioned (Bayliss (2004) 54 n.36).

⁶⁶ Karwiese (1989) 18–20 and (1999) 83; Thür (2003) 265, 267.

⁶⁷ Karwiese (1999) 82.

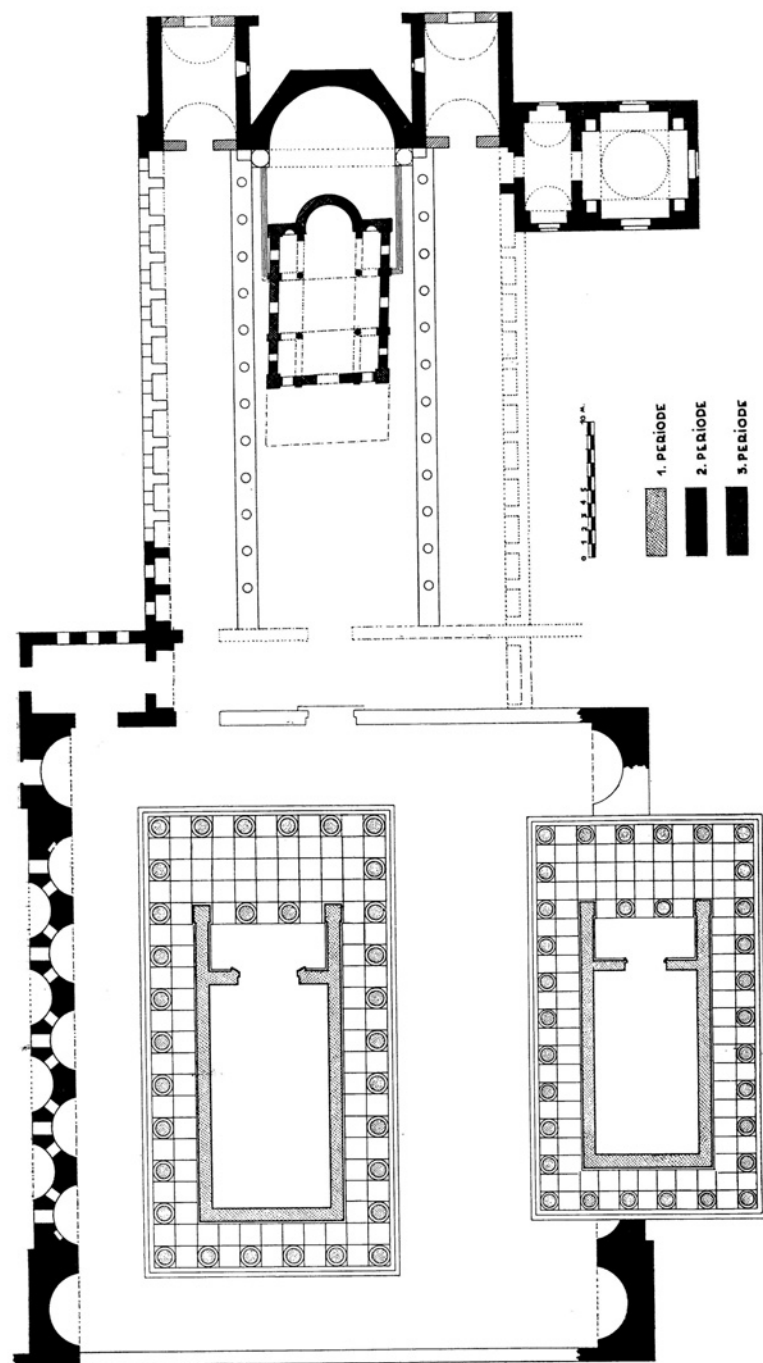


Fig. 5 Plan of the temples of Apollo and Athena within the courtyard of the Christian basilica at Side (Mansel (1978) 258, fig. 284).

there was a gradual dismantlement of the buildings inside the sanctuary, which contained three temples dedicated to Leto, Artemis and Apollo respectively. Much of the building material of the two latter shrines was removed for use elsewhere, including the church constructed inside the former sanctuary, to the south of the three temples. The date of the construction of this basilica has been attributed to the 6th c.⁶⁸ The Temple of Leto, however, was not demolished. Traces of a corridor connecting the temple to the narthex of the ecclesiastical building have been uncovered, suggesting that the standing shrine was used as an auxiliary structure of the church until its destruction in the 7th c., most probably as the result of an earthquake.⁶⁹

In contrast to a *temenos*-church, a temple-*spolia* church likewise reused parts of a former shrine but the building was constructed from the remains of a temple that had first been destroyed or dismantled and its building material transported to a new location. There was thus no direct continuity between the pagan and Christian occupation of temple and church.⁷⁰ An example of such a temple-*spolia* church is the so-called Basilica E1 at Sagalassos, an extra-mural tripartite transept-basilica situated in the former stadion of the city and dated to the second half of the 5th c. or early 6th c.⁷¹ The church was erected using *spolia* which came from at least three different buildings, as could be deduced from the ornaments on the decorated blocks. These include the Temple of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (cf *supra*) and another small Antonine (probably Hadrianic) Corinthian *distylos in antis* with a Syrian gable, that was identified as a temple for Dionysus. The latter shrine was dismantled and its material was completely reused as the northern part of the transept, including the figural friezes depicting masks of maenads and silens on the outside and dancing satyrs on the inside (fig. 6), which remained intact in the new building.⁷² To allow

⁶⁸ Metzger (1966) 111 and (1978) 797; Foss (1994) 13; des Courtils (2003) 133 and 153.

⁶⁹ des Courtils (2003) 153.

⁷⁰ Bayliss (2004) 35, 43–44. The literarily attested 4th c. church reusing elements from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Aigai belongs to this category (cf *supra*).

⁷¹ For the late 5th c. date of the basilica with a similar plan in the former sanctuary of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos, see below.

⁷² Lanckoronksi (1892) 141, 151–52; Vandeput (1997) 83–88, 207–209; Waelkens and Talloen (in press). Concerning the Dionysiac friezes, Cyril Mango has argued that the use of ancient stones in highly conspicuous places in churches indicated that they were given a Christian reinterpretation, or that apotropaic power was attributed to them (Mango (1963) 63–64).



Fig. 6 Northern part of the transept and apse of Basilica E1 at Sagalassos with the figural friezes from the former Dionysus temple (picture taken by P. Talloen).

the builders to dismantle the temple and to reassemble the blocks in their correct relative locations a special numbering system was used.

Finally, the large three-aisled basilica (A) with double *narthex* in the western necropolis of Lycian Kyaneai was constructed out of the remains of the 1st c. A.D. Doric—probably *distylos in antis*—temple of the city's chief goddess Eleuthera Archegetis. The basilica also utilised the remains of other buildings and its construction has been assigned to the period around 500 on the basis of its plan.⁷³

2) *Direct Conversion*

In the case of direct conversion, the standing material from a temple was physically reshaped into a church, so that the church preserved *in situ* some remains of the pre-existing temple.⁷⁴ A famous example of a pagan shrine converted on the spot for Christian use is the *Aphroditeion* at Aphrodisias, an early 1st c. A.D. peripteral temple built in the Ionic order, which was the most important and, until its conversion, still untouched pagan sanctuary of this city. The columns of the long sides of the *peristasis* stayed in their original places to form the partition between the central nave and the two aisles. The walls of the *cella* on the other hand were dismantled and the material was used for the construction of the outer walls of the church on the exterior of the peristyle, with the addition of a tripartite sanctuary in the east and a narthex and atrium in the west, thus creating a new structure that was substantially larger than its pagan predecessor. This conversion took place in the late 5th or early 6th c. A.D.⁷⁵

A similar process of 'inverted transformation' occurred at the site of the Temple of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos.⁷⁶ This Ionic peripteral temple, originally dating to the reign of Augustus, was converted into a tripartite transept-basilica in the second half of the 5th c., as indicated by recent test soundings.⁷⁷ As with the *Aphroditeion* mentioned above,

⁷³ Kolb *et al.* (1991) 213–14; Kupke (1993) 18–23; Foss (1994) 21; Brandt and Kolb (2005) 129.

⁷⁴ Bayliss (2004) 50–51. As pointed out by B. Ward-Perkins, this type of temple conversion is mainly attested in Asia Minor (Ward-Perkins (2003) 289).

⁷⁵ Cormack (1990) 76, 80–84; Smith and Ratté (1995) 45–46 and (2000) 227–28. According to some scholars (Trombley (1993) 1. 81–82 and 2. 21, 52–73; Harl (2001) 312) the ill-fated backing of the usurper Illus by the city against the emperor Zeno (A.D. 484–88) formed the direct occasion for the conversion of the temple.

⁷⁶ Waelkens *et al.* (1990) 185–90.

⁷⁷ Talloen (2007).

the walls of the *cella* were removed to form the exterior of the *peristasis*, and the columns of the latter were moved further into the interior of the church. A small transept, only slightly wider than the nave, was inserted near the eastern end of the basilica which was formed by a polygonal apse (fig. 7).

Other direct temple conversions were less spectacular, retaining the outer structure of the building, as in the case of the so-called Red Hall, the alleged sanctuary of the Egyptian gods at Pergamon. This temple, the largest in the city, allegedly underwent its conversion in the second half of the 5th c., retaining its brick walls but receiving an apse at its eastern end and a nave with flanking aisles inside.⁷⁸

The great Temple of Artemis Ephesia was also converted into a basilica in the later 5th c. A.D., using the *sekos* walls for the construction of the basilica within which pillars were built to support the roof of the church, and incorporating the *pronaos* of the former temple as the *narthex*.⁷⁹ A church was likewise built inside the *sekos* of the Temple of Apollo at Didyma in the late 5th or the early 6th c. (fig. 8). The latter was of such a scale that the ecclesiastical building did not have any physical relationship to the temple walls, except for the *naiskos* that was incorporated into its west end.⁸⁰ Also at Aizanoi the Temple of Zeus was transformed into a church with only minimal architectural changes, namely the addition of an apse to the east-facing *pronaos*.⁸¹ The date of the conversion of the temple is unknown.⁸²

At Cilician Diocaesarea the *peristasis* of the Temple of Zeus Olbios was incorporated within the exterior wall of the basilica, while the

⁷⁸ Nohlen (1998) 99–103.

⁷⁹ Bammer (1999) 86–87; Thür (2003) 266–67; Muss (2007) 247.

⁸⁰ Wiegand and Knackfuss (1941) 29–37; Peschlow (1975) 211.

⁸¹ A similar structural modification was used for the conversion of the Temple of Augustus and Rome at Ankara where an apse was attached to the east-facing *opisthodomos*. For this transformation no archaeologically verifiable date is available, other than a 5th c. one based on the style of the apse (Foss (1977) 65). The 7th c. date recently suggested by Serin, on the basis of the contemporary Persian and Arab raids, is very speculative (Serin (2006)).

⁸² Little is known about this temple conversion, as at the beginning of the excavations in the 1920s only the onset of the apse was still preserved (Rheidt (2003) 242). Yet, Rheidt argues, based on the fact that the Zeus-temple became the destination for the newly constructed colonnaded street, that its transformation into a church must have been finished before the completion of this artery, i.e. around 400 (Rheidt (2003) 244). However, judging by the city map, the agora may also have been the goal of the new main boulevard, with the former temple retaining its aesthetic role as an urban vista; this would make such an early date for the conversion unfounded.

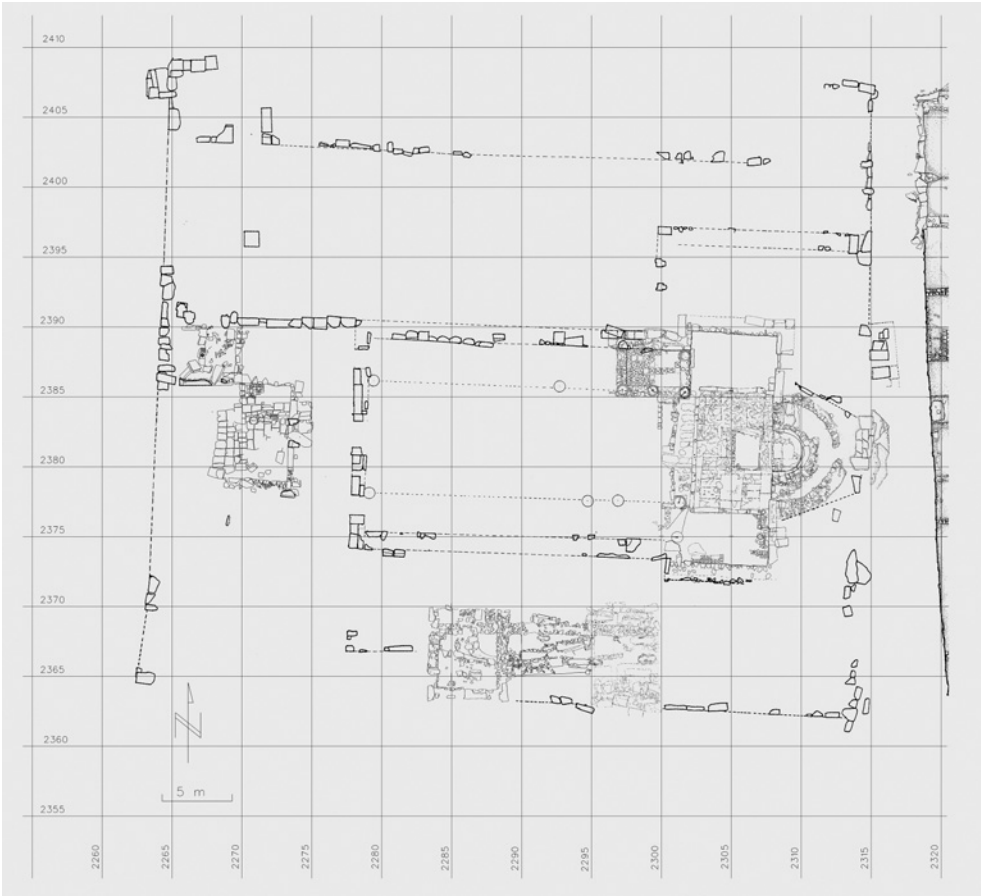


Fig. 7 Plan of the temple-church within the former sanctuary of Apollo Klaros at Sagalassos (Sagalassos archive).

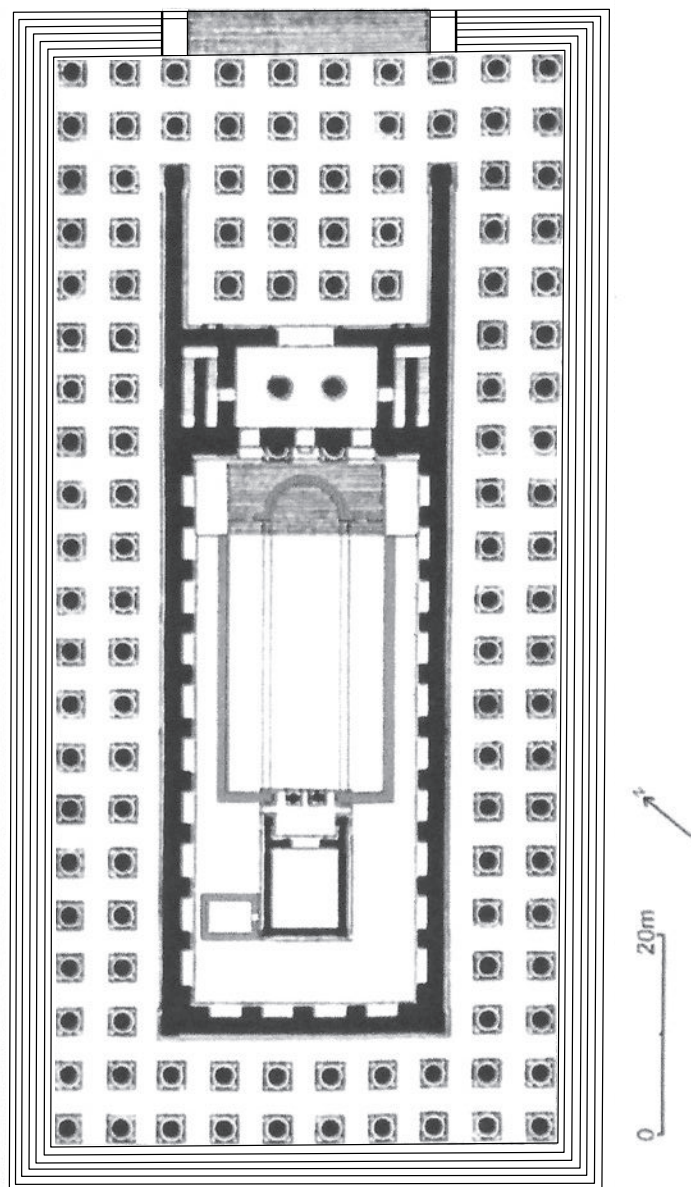


Fig. 8 Plan of the church constructed within the *sekos* of the sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma (Bayliss (2004) 162, fig. 43).

cella was probably dismantled and reused in the blocking of the intercolumnations. A date in the second half of the 5th c. has been argued for the conversion on the basis of the arrangement of the choir and *narthex*.⁸³ Of the Zeus temple at Selge in Pisidia only the eastern facade of the *peripteros*, facing the city centre, was retained in the conversion of the church, while the rest of the pagan building was systematically dismantled and its blocks modified for reuse sometime in the late 5th to early 6th c.⁸⁴ This unusual modification may have been chosen for aesthetic reasons.⁸⁵

Perhaps the most dramatic fate of pagan temples was their transformation into a Christian church, but in spite of the importance attached by Deichmann to the phenomenon,⁸⁶ Vaes' survey of reutilisation in Early Christian architecture has clearly demonstrated that Christian reuse of secular buildings was more common for the erection of churches in Late Antiquity.⁸⁷ Moreover, also from the perspective of the temple, the temple-church will undoubtedly not have been the regular fate it has often made out to be. It is impossible to quantify the proportion of temples that were not transformed into churches since those that were not converted rarely survive. Nevertheless, when viewed against the mere twenty cases of direct temple conversion recorded by Bayliss for Asia Minor,⁸⁸ the numerous ruins of temples still present in the Anatolian landscape today already demonstrate the exceptional character of such a process.

⁸³ Bayliss (2004) 71–73. A similar method was used for the transformation of the peripteral Temple of Zeus at nearby Seleukeia (Bayliss (2004) 74–76).

⁸⁴ Machatschek and Schwarz (1981) 109–10.

⁸⁵ A similar concern for aesthetics, may also be at the root of the extraordinary example of the basilica erected near the podium-temple at the northern end of the colonnaded street at Selge. This ancient temple devoted to the imperial cult was left standing and incorporated into the *narthex* of the ecclesiastical building, where it served as a kind of chapel. This church can also be dated to the late 5th or 6th c., as seems to be confirmed by the presence of a mosaic in *bec-de-merle* (Machatschek and Schwarz (1981) 105; 113–14).

⁸⁶ Deichmann (1939).

⁸⁷ Vaes (1984–86); see also Caillet (1996) 201–202. This has recently been confirmed by Bayliss' study of the churches in Cilica. Of the fifteen ecclesiastical buildings formerly thought to have been built from reused temples only seven are now believed to have been (of which only three are direct conversions), leading to the conclusion that temples were apparently not as significant for the construction of churches in the region as had been presumed (Bayliss (2004) 102).

⁸⁸ Bayliss (2004) 111 Chart 3. Temple-*spolia* churches are found much more widely than any type of direct conversion (Bayliss (2004) 48).

3) *Temple Conversion and Christian Perception*

As is clear from the numerous examples, the indirect conversion of temples and their material remains into churches took place throughout Late Antiquity, from the 4th to the 7th c.⁸⁹ Direct conversions, on the other hand, appear to have occurred only from the middle of the 5th c. onwards,⁹⁰ half a century after the indirect conversions began.⁹¹ Unfortunately, there are very few well-dated examples of Christian temple conversions in Asia Minor and it is rare to have the precise stratigraphical dating, which is possible in the cases of Aphrodisias and Sagalassos where temple conversions have been reliably placed in the later 5th c. Nevertheless, it seems clear that a period of time elapsed between the closure and the abandonment of each temple and its conversion into a church, a characteristic that is found throughout the eastern Mediterranean.⁹² We will now turn to some of the explanations for this 'delay' and also elucidate the possible motivations.

According to Hanson, the practice of transforming pagan temples was probably initiated by the law of the year A.D. 435.⁹³ In that year a law of Theodosius II officially ordained the prohibition of all pagan cults and encouraged the destruction and transformation of temples and shrines by the Christians, their walls being purified by the sign of the cross.⁹⁴ Yet, this piece of legislation cannot have had the far-reaching effect attributed to it by many modern scholars. As already argued by Frantz, the law was misinterpreted as an authorisation of the conversion of temples into places of Christian worship, as an alternative to destruction. The text, however, presents no alternative and suggests not conversion, but rather exorcism of the pagan spirits which might

⁸⁹ Bayliss (2004) 56–57.

⁹⁰ There is no archaeological evidence from Asia Minor that supports the early use of pagan sanctuaries for the creation of Christian ecclesiastical structures. The single exception may be the reference to a converted temple by Gregory of Nazianzus (*PG* 38, col. 99), but the exact nature of this transformation is not specified. The examples cited in the article of Pont (Pont (2004) 563) either have uncertain (the *Sarapeion* at Ephesus post dating the reign of Theodosius) or revised dates (the Apollo temple at Didyma dated to the late 5th or early 6th c. (Peschlow (1975) 211)), or are not an example of direct conversion (the *Artemision* at Sardis).

⁹¹ The *temenos* of a sanctuary appears not to have been regarded with the same mistrust as the temple itself (Bayliss (2004) 45).

⁹² Spieser (1976) 310–12; Hanson (1978) 257; Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 49; Caillet (1996) 196–97; Hahn (2001) 282; Bayliss (2004) 50–57; see also the contribution of Dijkstra to this volume.

⁹³ Hanson (1978) 263.

⁹⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25.

have survived the destruction of the building. There was no provision for conversion because the order for destruction was regarded as final.⁹⁵ Rather, this measure should be seen as an attempt to speed up the transition from paganism to Christianity. Moreover, the evidence does not show a sudden spate of direct conversion activity after A.D. 435. The chronological variance between conversions in different regions identifies it as a symptom of local circumstances rather than a centrally motivated process.⁹⁶ Therefore, reasons for the interval between abandonment and conversion must be looked for elsewhere.

One explanation for this hiatus could be that pagan sites were generally considered to be the homes of demons.⁹⁷ Fear of temple sites and their evil spirits may in some places have led to a period of isolation before they were put to Christian use.⁹⁸ Codes of avoidance, largely centred on the pagan rituals and sacrifices, are known to have existed among Christians.⁹⁹ Yet, those demons were believed to be relatively powerless against God, so if someone wanted to purify the site of a temple, the procedure would have been relatively easy. Christian crosses could be carved on the remains of former pagan constructions, as we have already seen, and the sign of the cross born by a powerful priest could have accomplished an exorcism.¹⁰⁰ This is confirmed by the early secular conversions of temples, as exemplified at Sagalassos. Indeed, the construction of a church would be the ultimate means of spiritual cleansing.

Another theory is that temple sites could have remained in use for a period of time for mercantile, fiscal and social activities, roles that pagan sanctuaries had always played, with only the cult activities set aside.¹⁰¹ Many abandoned temples would then have taken on transient functions, and were perhaps even used as places of Christian worship, according to Bayliss,¹⁰² in the 4th and early 5th centuries prior to their official conversion. Unfortunately, while this is not impossible, there

⁹⁵ Frantz (1965) 187–88.

⁹⁶ Bayliss (2004) 57.

⁹⁷ This is attested by numerous examples in the hagiography. For Anatolia see for instance the life of Saint Theodore of Sykeon, as discussed by Mitchell (1982) and that of Saint Nikolas of Sion, as discussed by Foss (1991). See also Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 54–58 and Hahn (2001).

⁹⁸ Mango (1980) 61; Bayliss (2004) 60.

⁹⁹ Brown (1995) 16–19.

¹⁰⁰ Rothaus (2000) 52; Bayliss (2004) 58.

¹⁰¹ MacMullen (1984) 96–97; Bayliss (2004) 58–59, 61–62.

¹⁰² Bayliss (2004) 62–64.

is no archaeological evidence to support this theory. Furthermore, although this could explain their survival into the period of conversion, it does not account for the hiatus.

A third explanation emphasises the need felt by Christians to distinguish themselves from the older pagan places of worship. In the first place, it would be ideologically difficult to justify the reuse of ground considered polluted by pagan sacrifice.¹⁰³ This finds corroboration in the story of the conversion of the Temple of Rhea at Cyzicus into a church of Maria Theotokos during the reign of Leo I (A.D. 457–74) or Zeno (A.D. 474–91), told in a late 5th c. syncretistic text known as the Tübingen Theosophy. The account says that, at the time of the conversion, a miraculous discovery was made of an inscription recording an ancient oracular pronouncement by Apollo that predicted the future dedication of the building to Mary. Whether this story is based on a true event or not is not an issue here, but it clearly illustrates the mental gymnastics and the need for an ideological justification in the eyes of the local community before taking the unusual step of converting a temple into a church.¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, for the newly established Christian power structure, which was attempting to differentiate itself from existing types of ritual activity, the building type of the former pagan sanctuaries, the temple, was not necessarily suitable. The earliest churches were converted from private dwellings.¹⁰⁵ When monumental churches began to emerge from Constantine onwards they took the form of existing secular buildings, notably the basilica, and were located on long-standing Christian sites, often physically removed from existing pagan urban centres such as the martyr churches built beyond the walls of Rome and other cities. The adoption of secular building forms differentiated the 4th c. churches from the pagan temples and also reflected the claim of the churches to now hold the power and symbolic significance of the buildings whose forms they shared, particularly *bouleuteria* and *basilicae*. The reuse of such existing secular buildings for the purpose of religious worship was the usual practice in the Early Christian period.¹⁰⁶ These types of buildings were falling out of use in the 4th and the 5th centuries with the declining importance of the *decuriones* and were structures

¹⁰³ Ward-Perkins (2003) 286.

¹⁰⁴ Ward-Perkins (1999) 238.

¹⁰⁵ See White (1990).

¹⁰⁶ Meier (1996) 371; Bayliss (2004) 33.

that were easily adaptable to Christian use.¹⁰⁷ In the ancient region of Pisidia alone there were churches built in the former *bouleuteria* at Sagalassos, Selge and Pednelissos, and in the Roman civil *basilica* at Kremna, all of which can be dated to the early 5th c.¹⁰⁸

When the initial mistrust of temples amongst the Christian communities had eventually dissipated, the direct conversion of urban temples into churches began in the second half of the 5th c. It is significant, however, that by no means all temples were chosen for reuse in this way. This is exemplified by the different treatment of temples within the city of Sagalassos. While the sanctuary of Apollo was selected for religious conversion, the temples of Zeus (tower), of Dionysus (*spolia*) and of the divine emperors (*spolia*) suffered different fates. Furthermore, the main criterion was apparently not whether the temple in question had survived the period of transition and was still in a reasonable state of preservation, but how well that temple might be suited to its new Christian function, and for that size and location were crucial.

The pagan temple as *domus dei* or house of god—a building for the cult-effigy of the deity—was replaced by the church as *domus ecclesiae* or house of the community—a structure primarily intended to host a congregation of worshippers that came together in the name of an omnipresent God who could be worshipped in any location. The increasing numbers of Christian worshippers required larger church buildings in urban centres traditionally dominated by pagan temples, whose closed interiors now had to be opened for Christian use.¹⁰⁹ In many cities it was the temple of the patron deity that was most prominently converted into a church: Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, Apollo at

¹⁰⁷ Liebeschuetz (2001) 110, 121.

¹⁰⁸ Sagalassos: Waelkens *et al.* (2006) 220, Waelkens and Talloen (in press); Selge: Machatschek and Schwarz (1981) 107–108; Pednelissos: Karas and Ristow (2003) 139–41; Kremna: Mitchell (1995) 220–22.

¹⁰⁹ On the importance of the size of the original building see Bayliss (2004) 104; he concludes that in Cilicia, at least, small temples were not considered appropriate for conversion. The small churches arranged in the Temple of Sarapis at Ephesus and in the unidentified temple at Elauissa-Sebaste (Gough (1954); Bayliss (2004) 76–79) are exceptional, both in size and in plan—perpendicular to the axis of their predecessor. According to Gough, who argues for a population decline in Elauissa-Sebaste in Late Antiquity, a larger church built around the *peripteros* of the latter temple would have been impractical for the requirements of the diminished congregation (Gough (1954) 57–58). Bayliss, on the other hand, has suggested on the basis of the architectural complexities of the structure, the possibility that it represents a second stage in the conversion of the building, whereby the chapel replaced an earlier (and larger) *basilica* similar to the one at nearby Diocaesarea (Bayliss (2004) 78–79).

Sagalassos, and Zeus at Selge, Diocaesarea and Aizanoi, to mention the examples that have been addressed here.¹¹⁰ The Red Hall will obviously have been selected because it was the largest temple in Pergamon, whose centre now moved to the lower city.¹¹¹

Aesthetic considerations may also have played some role in the conversion of temples. As already noted, the aesthetic quality of the pagan structures was not underestimated and apparently preserved as long as possible, regardless of its new function. In many instances of direct conversion the temple peristyle was preserved in the new church building, either inside, forming the interior colonnades (as in Aphrodisias and Sagalassos), or in the outer fabric (as at Aizanoi and, to some extent, at Selge). The scale, essential form, surrounding architectural context and strong verticality imposed by the *peristasis* were maintained in the church. Temples converted in this way therefore still retained many of their pre-existing visual qualities.¹¹² In a number of other temple conversions, when the church was built entirely within the peristyle, *cella* or *sekos*, the transformation may not even have been possible to detect from a distance. Examples of this are the Zeus temple at Aizanoi, the Red Hall at Pergamon, the Apollo Temple of Didyma, and the *Artemision* of Ephesus. Bayliss even suggested the emergence at this time of an architectural vocabulary which favoured this particular kind of reuse for temples that were still in a reasonable state of preservation, as the explanation for the hiatus between the abandonment and conversion of temples.¹¹³

Also on the level of the cityscape, the aesthetics of pagan architecture continued to dominate the late antique city. Greek and Roman cities were always very proud of their beautiful public buildings and wanted to impress each other, the provincial governor and the emperor. The abandoned temples of patron gods were generally located at prominent places in the city, the topography of which was often arranged around the shrines. But once these prestigious monuments to the past were in

¹¹⁰ As they were situated outside the city walls the temples of Apollo at Didyma and of Artemis at Ephesus, although being the sanctuaries of the patron deities, cannot be included here since they will not have been congregational churches. Their conversion will have been due to the important sacred character of the location. The same is true for numerous temple-churches in the countryside, such as the ecclesiastical structures at the Corcyrian Cave in Cilicia (see Bayliss (2004) 79–86).

¹¹¹ The upper city had become abandoned during the 4th c. (Rheidt (1998) 397).

¹¹² Bayliss (1999) 64.

¹¹³ Bayliss (2004) 108.

decay, and the commanding positions they occupied within the urban religious landscape became available, they were eagerly replaced by grand basilicas. Because these places attracted the attention of citizens and visitors, they had to retain their monumental splendour, and replacing the decaying pagan monumental foci with new Christian buildings was a way of maintaining the monumentality of a city.¹¹⁴

Finally, the conversion of these great temples was also necessary in order to Christianise the urban sacred landscape, since they occupied the most prominent locations. The conversion of the temples has often been approached in terms of Christian triumph.¹¹⁵ Converted temples are seen as indicative of the demise of paganism and an assertion of Christian domination, a symbol of Christian victory. Yet the hiatus between the decline of these pagan shrines and their transformation into churches, that we have already traced, would indicate that the construction of the church on the same site was not simply a symbol of victory of one religion over the other.¹¹⁶

The privileged topographical position of these sanctuaries within their cities, together with their large size, made them natural gathering places for any religious congregation, including a Christian one.¹¹⁷ The reuse of these abandoned buildings was also logical for practical and economic reasons, and was promoted by the Church, one of the few flourishing institutions of the late antique city.¹¹⁸ Ideologically, the sanctuaries perhaps embodied an element of continuity and familiarity for new converts (and those yet to be converted), which eased the transition to the new religion. Some would surely have recognised the ancient sanctity of such sites and so respected the church they now attended. For the generations who had witnessed or participated in urban rituals before the closure or destruction of their cities' temples, there would be a certain familiarity in the urban manifestation and context of Christianity, which presented itself as the natural and inevitable successor to the worship of the old gods.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 52, 61; Alchermes (1994) 167–68; Ward-Perkins (2003) 289.

¹¹⁵ On the conversion of temples as the symbol of the *ecclesia triumphans* see Deichmann (1939) 109 and 114; recently Brandt and Kolb (2005) 123.

¹¹⁶ See Spieser (1976) 320; Bayliss (2004) 58.

¹¹⁷ According to Spieser, the main explanation would be the lack of available land in the cities resulting from their reduced size (Spieser (1976) 311).

¹¹⁸ Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 52–53.

¹¹⁹ Trombley (1993–94) 1. 147–68; Bayliss (1999) 68.

Temple-churches constitute only one category of the reused temples, and their *spolia*, that continued to dominate the late antique city in Asia Minor, but more than any other category they offer an ongoing point of contact with the pagan sacred landscape.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evidence from Asia Minor, presented here in a brief overview, supports the prevailing interpretation of temple structures in the late antique period through a paradigm of abandonment and decline. Although hardly any temples have been the object of recent excavations, the few archaeologically examined examples in Asia Minor do not show any signs of ongoing cult activity from the 4th c. onwards. The Christians who rose to prominence in the 4th c. did not find the temples to be the vibrant centres of ritual activity that they had once been. There was no longer any strong desire from the emperors or the local elite to devote funds to the temples and their rituals, and as the centres of public worship the temples were also the target of anti-pagan legislation and action. The legal closure of the temples in the late 4th and early 5th c. made any official pagan cultic activity impossible. Whether this signified the end of cult ritual at temple sites altogether is impossible to conclude from the incomplete archaeological record, but pagans and paganism continued to appear in literary sources and material culture well into the 6th c. A.D.¹²⁰

It should be clear from this short survey that the fate of temples in Late Antiquity comprised more than just destruction or conversion to churches, the two scenarios closely linked to the dominant theory of religious conflict and the ensuing violence, expounded in many of the earlier studies. The sometimes confrontational character of the religious transition did not necessarily entail a complete rejection of the pagan past and temples were often reused for a variety of non-ideological and more practical purposes as secular buildings or for retrieving building material. Perhaps the most dramatic destiny of pagan temples was their transformation into Christian churches, but we hope to have demonstrated here that this was only one of the available options and certainly not the most common one. This illustrates the increasingly

¹²⁰ See our contribution on material culture in this volume.

complex view of the fate of temples since Deichmann's survey, who seemingly characterised the conversion of temples into churches as inevitable.

A precise chronology for the history of temple use and reuse in Asia Minor cannot be established with the limited stratified evidence we possess. Yet, the presented examples do allow an approximate pattern to be laid down. The early evidence for temple demolition, whether deliberate or not, emerges significantly in the late 4th and early 5th c., as we see at Ephesus and Sagalassos for instance. It has proved hard to find examples of temple destruction in the archaeological record, from which we may conclude that actual destruction was apparently rare and deconsecration was definitely the rule in the treatment of temples. Many instances of violence might therefore be better defined as aggressive deconsecrations rather than actual destructions, while dismantlement of the buildings is generally mistaken for destruction in most of the studies on the topic.

The reuse of material from temples that had already fallen into disrepair also begins in the same period, and becomes more common through the 5th c. The ruins of many abandoned temples were a wealthy resource for the increasingly opportunistic builders and lime-burners of Late Antiquity. The conversion of temples into secular or monumental use, often as part of an attempt to preserve cultural heritage, is visible in the late 4th and early 5th c., for example at Sagalassos and Ephesus. The indirect conversion of temple remains into churches likewise dates from the first half of the 5th c. onwards (or perhaps even earlier), with the *Artemision* at Sardis, the *Olympieion* at Ephesus and possibly the temples of Athena and Apollo at Side as well. The direct conversion of temple structures into churches appears to come slightly later than the examples of indirect use, with the two stratigraphically dated examples, the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias and the Temple of Apollo at Sagalassos, both converted in the late 5th c. The *temenos*- and *spolia*-churches may then be seen as a feature originating in a time before direct conversions and therefore reflecting a code of avoidance that still existed in this period.

In situ temple conversion played a minor role in the context of church construction during the 5th and 6th centuries, but the importance of the phenomenon lies in its highly symbolic character. According to many scholars, it should be seen as a powerful manifestation of the triumph of one religion over the other, which had a significant impact

on the minds of contemporaries. Yet, the observed hiatus between the temple's abandonment and its conversion for Christian use rules out such a triumphalist policy of deliberate appropriation. The conversion of urban sanctuaries took place only after Christianity made significant inroads in the city and had become the dominant socio-political force. The privileged topographical position of these sanctuaries within urban centres, together with their large size, afforded important gathering places for the Christian congregation, and probably drove their transformation into churches. The effect of these conversion scenarios was that urban vistas were perpetuated and sacred localities preserved under a Christian guise. This transformation and preservation of the sacred landscape played a crucial role in the continuity of traditional urban life in the increasingly Christian world of late antique Asia Minor.

Finally, what should perhaps be stressed more when examining the fate of temples is the fact that it varied widely from city to city. Of the six known monumental temples of Ephesus, for example, only two were converted into churches while the other four were completely dismantled—although the *Olympieion* received a church in its *temenos*. At the small Pisidian city of Adada, on the other hand, three of the four known temples were simply left standing as monuments to the past. The pagan centres of Sagalassos, in turn, covered the whole range of possibilities as to their treatment.

In this situation it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions as to why a particular pagan shrine was taken over, and another not. The reuse of ancient monuments has always been subject to a range of motivations. At one extreme these were strictly utilitarian (economic), whilst at the other they were symbolic, and concerned the reintegration of carriers of meaning (cultic or historic) into urban landscapes.¹²¹ Temples were no exception to this. One could say that the multifaceted behaviour of late antique people towards temples reflects the religious complexity of society in this period.

¹²¹ See Ward-Perkins (1999).

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THE FATE OF THE TEMPLES IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

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Abstract

As elsewhere the fate of the temples in late antique Egypt has often been perceived through the lens of the (Christian) literary works, which tell dramatic stories of the destruction of temples and their conversion into churches. When one looks at the other types of sources available from Egypt—inscriptions, papyri and archaeological remains—however, it becomes abundantly clear that the story of what happened to the temples was usually much less dramatic. This article argues that, in order to get a more reliable and complex picture of the fate of the temples, it is best to study them within a local or regional context and from a variety of sources, especially material remains since they can provide the most detailed picture of a whole range of methods of reuse, if the building was reused at all. A case study (of the First Cataract region, Southern Egypt) confirms that violence against temples and their reuse as churches were indeed exceptional and but two aspects in the complex process of the changing sacred landscape of Late Antiquity.

INTRODUCTION: FROM TEMPLE TO CHURCH?

In his seminal article on the phenomenon of ‘temple conversion’, Friedrich Deichmann wrote seventy years ago about the fate of the temples in Egypt:

Similar conditions prevailed in Egypt. Already under Constantius, a mithraeum was handed over to the Christians of Alexandria. The mob plundered it and desecrated the mysteries, surely not without the silent approval of the priesthood. Under Theodosius followed the destruction of the famous Serapeum, during which the cult image was particularly attacked. In Upper Egypt temple destructions were still in full swing in the 5th c.¹

¹ Deichmann (1939) 110 (my translation). For the mithraeum incident see Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.2 (*GCS* Neue Folge 1, pp. 193–94) and Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.7 (*GCS* 50, pp. 202–203), on the historicity of which see Hahn (2004) 67–68.

This passage is typical of the way in which Deichmann tried to sketch a historical background to his catalogue of 89 cases of temple conversion in the preceding narrative part of his article. By basing himself almost entirely on literary sources such as the law codes, Deichmann was under the impression that violence against temples and their subsequent conversion into churches was a widespread phenomenon throughout the Mediterranean in the 4th and 5th c.—and Egypt formed no exception to that trend.²

There are few scholars today who would subscribe to a monolithic development from temple to church in a context of religious violence. Thanks to a massive number of archaeological studies published over the last few decades, which to be fair to Deichmann were not yet available when he was writing, we know that temples, if they were indeed reused, were often reused for a variety of other, less ideological and more practical purposes as secular buildings or for retrieving building material. Only in exceptional cases, and mostly at a later time, from the second half of the 5th c. onwards, were temples reused as churches. This means that in those cases in which temples were turned into churches, the buildings had usually already been abandoned for a considerable time or had been reused for other purposes.³ Thus the fate of the temples is significantly more complex than a generalisation ‘from temple to church’ would allow: reuse as a church was just one of the options.⁴

The new archaeological data has also encouraged scholars to re-evaluate the literary sources on temple destruction and conversion. When the emphasis on violence is taken away, it becomes clear that there is also evidence in the sources for the appreciation of these buildings as monuments, and that they could not be dismantled without special permission.⁵ Moreover, good progress has been made in studying temple destruction as a literary construct. In a similar way as monastic literature gives the impression that Egyptian monks lived

² The last statement of the quotation above, for instance, is based entirely on Leipoldt's (1903) 175–82 interpretation of several passages from Shenoute's works; recently, however, it has been shown by Emmel (2008) 165–66 (n.15) that there remains only one secure case of a temple destruction from these works in which Shenoute was involved.

³ This has been particularly well-illustrated by Bayliss (2004) 58–64 (chapt. 5), who is also the first to distinguish several different types of temple to church conversions (pp. 32–49 (chapt. 3)), and includes many more important observations on the practicalities involved in temple reuse.

⁴ My criticism (Dijkstra (2005)) of Bayliss' (2004) 67–106 case study of temple conversions in Cilicia was that it deals only with temple to church conversions.

⁵ Saradi-Mendelovici (1990).

almost exclusively in the desert,⁶ Christian literature leads us to believe that these destructions were fairly common. However, it is well-known that the literary motif of temple and idol destruction became one of the most important paradigms in the Christian ideology of Late Antiquity (which I take in this article to span the 4th to 6th c.) and should therefore be treated with caution.⁷ This is not to deny that such destructions occasionally took place and could have had an enormous impact, but recent studies show that we should approach carefully every instance where a temple 'destruction' is mentioned in literary works and corroborate it with other types of evidence. In some cases we can assume that some degree of violence indeed occurred; in other cases, where a 'destruction' is referred to in the written sources, only a closure took place; or the account could be complete fiction.⁸

A recent important contribution to the study of the phenomenon is the volume *From Temple to Church. Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, of which the majority of the papers concern Egypt.⁹ Most of the articles start from the (Christian) literary sources and contain detailed analyses of passages that mention temple destructions, some placed in their literary or historical contexts.¹⁰ Despite what the title suggests (significantly a borrowing from another article by Deichmann!), in the introduction the editors show that they are well aware of the complexity of the phenomenon of temple conversion.¹¹ Yet even though the volume as a whole testifies to a more complex picture of the fate of the temples, the emphasis is still too much on literary accounts of violence and on the development from temple to

⁶ As shown by Goehring (1993). See also Dijkstra and Van Dijk (2006a) 1.

⁷ For temple destruction as an ideological paradigm, see Hahn (2001). A more extensive, if less cautious, treatment of religious violence in literary works is Gaddis (2005) 151–250 (chaps. 5 and 6). For some insightful remarks about the limitations of Christian literature, starting from the case of temple destructions, see Bagnall (2008) 25–32.

⁸ We can, for example, reasonably speak of at least some damage done to the Serapeum at Alexandria and another temple at Atripe, both at the end of the 4th c.; the case of the 'destruction' of the Temple of Isis at Philae in A.D. 535–37, as reported by Procopius, is probably an exaggeration of what could not have been more than a symbolic closure; finally, in the *Life of Aaron* (6th c.) the elimination of the holy falcon of Philae is mentioned as brought about by Bishop Macedonius, who lived in the first half of the 4th c., but this account is almost certainly fictional. For more detailed discussion, see below.

⁹ Hahn, Emmel and Gotter (2008), on which see Dijkstra (2009b).

¹⁰ Particular good examples are the interesting study by Gotter (2008), who discusses temple destruction as a literary motif in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* and in the 4th and 5th c. Church historians, and Emmel (2008) who tries to look beyond the rhetoric of the temple and idol destructions mentioned in Shenoute's works.

¹¹ Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008).

church, a criticism that is voiced in the volume itself by Roger Bagnall.¹² By contrast, several contributions in the present volume provide a more balanced and complete picture of the whole range of ways in which temples were reused in Late Antiquity across the Mediterranean. They are mostly based on archaeological material and provide a clear illustration of the fact that violence against temples was rather exceptional. Thus they show that the best way to grasp the full complexity of the phenomenon is by approaching it primarily—though not exclusively—through the archaeological record.¹³

In a recent reappraisal of Deichmann's 1939 article, Bryan Ward-Perkins has considerably refined the methodology used to approach the archaeological material. Apart from advocating a cautious attitude towards the literary sources, especially when they date to a later period, Ward-Perkins adds two further points. Firstly, we should not focus too much on the reuse of a temple as a church; we should also take into account what he calls the 'negative evidence', that is, the cases in which temples were not reused at all or reused for other purposes, as well as *de novo* church building, either on the site of a temple or elsewhere.¹⁴ Secondly, we should not focus too much on the building itself but look at it from the wider context of the surrounding (sacred) landscape.¹⁵ This wider perspective implies that temple reuse should be studied in a (local or) regional context since, as many recent studies have shown, such landscapes differed from place to place and from region to region, and had their own (local or) regional characteristics.¹⁶

¹² Bagnall (2008) 25, 32–33. It should be noted that several contributions, like the ones by Brakke (2008) and Grossmann (2008a), explicitly go against the idea of a development from temple to church, and that some, like the ones by Grossmann (2008a) and Bar (2008), mainly use archaeological evidence.

¹³ The introduction of *From Temple to Church* does not recognise the full potential of archaeological data. Cf. e.g., the statement by Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008) 11, "Even archaeology, which should be in the best position to provide both a methodical and a substantial corrective and to reveal the entire spectrum of reuses of former temples, seems here to be at a loss", which ignores the many archaeological studies that have been done in recent years on a wide range of reuses of temples.

¹⁴ This point is also made by Foschia (2000) 433.

¹⁵ Ward-Perkins (2003) 286. On sacred landscapes, see Caseau (1999).

¹⁶ Much good work has been done in Greece, see for a general overview Foschia (2000), with the important earlier studies of Spieser (1976) and Gregory (1986), and for a regional study of the Aegean Islands, Deligiannakis (this volume). As the reader will note, from now on I will refer to the phenomenon as 'temple reuse' rather than 'temple conversion'. The reason for this is that, even though in principle 'temple conversion' could imply any kind of reuse, in past scholarship it has usually been used

In this contribution about the fate of the temples in late antique Egypt, I would like to show the benefits of such a regional approach. A case study of the First Cataract region in Southern Egypt, in particular the ancient towns of Syene (modern Aswan), Elephantine and Philae, will reveal a wide spectrum of temple reuses in this regional setting. Naturally, given the topic, the focus will be more on the fate of the temples but I shall also include some remarks on church building outside the enclosure walls of temples in order to place the series of cases of temple reuse in perspective. Before we move on to the part on the First Cataract region, however, I shall make some general remarks about the sources available for the study of temples in late antique Egypt and what they say about the fate of its temples.

THE SOURCES: USE AND LIMITATIONS

There is no area in the Mediterranean that possesses such a wealth and variety of sources about the fate of the temples as Egypt. Aside from the literary works, there is an abundance of inscriptions and, given the excellent preservation circumstances, of archaeological remains. In addition, because of the same preservative conditions, Egypt is the only place where we can take into account documentary texts on papyrus. In the following, I will present each type of source, starting with the literary works, then discussing inscriptions and papyri, and ending with the archaeological record.

Since some recent reconstructions of the fate of the temples in Egypt have relied heavily on literary works, and these accounts are usually problematic, I will devote a whole section to this type of evidence. To redress the balance, in the second section I will then look at the other types of evidence, ending with the richest source, archaeology. Needless to say, it falls out of the scope of this paper to give a comprehensive account of all the sources relating to temples in late antique Egypt, but I hope to discuss at least a representative set of examples.¹⁷

to denote reuse as a church. In addition, 'reuse' conveys better the mostly practical decisions involved in what was done with former sacred buildings.

¹⁷ I am well aware that when I speak of 'temples' in what follows a wide variety of buildings is meant: small shrines and full-blown temples, temples in the countryside and temples in the cities, temples for the imperial cult and temples for 'normal' Egyptian cults, traditional pharaonic temples and temples in the Graeco-Roman style. Space does not allow for the differentiation of these buildings here.

The Problem of the Literary Works

As noted above in the introduction, many Christian literary works refer to the ‘destruction’ of temples in Late Antiquity, and this is no different in Egypt.¹⁸ The most famous case of such destructions is no doubt the destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in A.D. 392.¹⁹ This incident is reported not only by the Church historians Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, but also by the non-Christian sophist Eunapius, who is actually the first to write about the events only a few years later.²⁰ Yet despite the fact that we have five authors writing within a half a century or so of the events, the accounts are far from consistent and hence a reconstruction is hard to make. What seems clear, however, is that, partly through the involvement of Bishop Theophilus, riots broke out which resulted in the plundering of the Serapeum. The literary sources also do not agree on what happened after the closure of the Serapeum. Rufinus relates that on one side of the temple a martyr’s shrine was built and on the other a church, while according to Sozomen the temple was slightly later turned into a church named after the Emperor Arcadius (395–408).²¹ Eunapius and Rufinus report that some time thereafter the Sarapis Temple at Canopus, east of Alexandria (see fig. 1, a map on which other sites discussed in this article can also be found), was also destroyed at the instigation of Theophilus.²²

Menouthis, close to Canopus, was the scene of another temple destruction, this time at the end of the 5th c.²³ The story is told by

¹⁸ For much of what follows, see Dijkstra (2008) 87–93, with more detailed references.

¹⁹ This was not the first time the Serapeum was attacked, as it had happened before under Bishop George in A.D. 357–58, without, apparently, ending cultic practice inside the temple. See, with references, Hahn (2004) 68–70.

²⁰ Eunap. *VS* 6.10–11; Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.22–25, 27–30 (*GCS Neue Folge* 6.2, pp. 1025–32, 1033–36); Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 5.16–17 (*GCS Neue Folge* 1, pp. 289–91); Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 7.15, cf. 7.20 (*GCS* 50, pp. 319–21, 332–33); Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.22 (*GCS Neue Folge* 5, pp. 320–21).

²¹ Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.27 (*GCS Neue Folge* 6.2, p. 1033); Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 7.15 (*GCS* 50, p. 321). Some scholars take the passage from Rufinus to refer to the Serapeum of Canopus, e.g., Grossmann (2006) 205–207, and (2008a) 203–204, but cf. Thélamon (1981) 256 (n. 31: “le ch. 27 concerne Alexandrie et non Canope”), followed by Hahn (2004) 92, reiterated in Hahn (2008b) 352, McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes (2004) 107–109, reiterated in McKenzie (2007) 246.

²² Eunap. *VS* 6.11; Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.26 (*GCS Neue Folge* 6.2, pp. 1032–33). The most recent reconstruction of the events of A.D. 392 is Hahn (2004) 78–105 (101–103 on Canopus), of which Hahn (2008b) is a reworked version in English; on the date see Hahn (2006). Cf. the still useful work by Thélamon (1981) 245–79.

²³ For the location of the sites of Menouthis and Canopus, see now Stolz (2008).

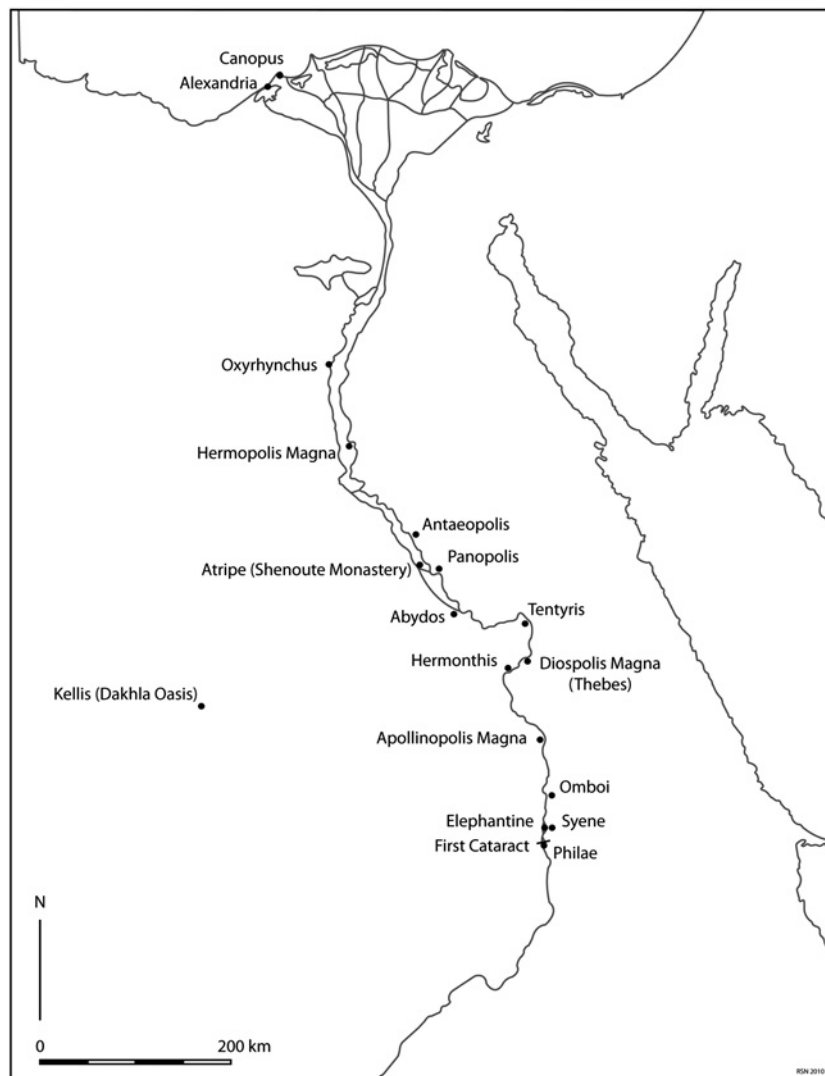


Fig. 1 Map of Egypt with places discussed in this article (after Bowman (1996) fig. 1).

Zachariah Scholasticus in the early 6th c. *Life of Severus*, which is preserved in Syriac but goes back on a Greek original. In the section of the *Life* that deals with Paralius, a student in the philosophical school at Alexandria, we hear about one of his professors, Asclepiodotus. This man went to a temple of Isis at Menouthis—described as located in a house, which apparently also possessed the furniture of another temple—in order to consult the priest about his wife who could not become pregnant. When nothing worked he received a child from someone else but pretended that his wife had given birth to it. News about this ‘miracle’ began circulating in the school but when Paralius expressed his doubts he was beaten up. Paralius then received help from Bishop Peter Mongus of Alexandria (480–88). The bishop mobilised a gang consisting of monks and clergymen, and together they destroyed the house shrine and burnt the idols hidden inside.²⁴

The works and *Life* of Shenoute of Atripe (ca. 360–465), abbot of the monastery named after him near Atripe on the other side of the Nile at Panopolis, further south in Upper Egypt, also contain such incidents.²⁵ At least three times in his own works Shenoute refers to his destruction of a temple at Atripe, which can perhaps be dated to the end of the 4th c.²⁶ The idols inside were destroyed, and subsequently the temple was set on fire. Shenoute also mentions his rather indirect involvement in the destruction of another temple.²⁷ This temple may be the temple of Pneuit, mentioned in the encomiastic tradition collected in the *Life of Shenoute* (after ca. 465) that is ascribed to his successor Besa. In this work, Shenoute is said to have entered the temple and smashed and destroyed its idols.²⁸ Finally, well-known from his own works and his *Life*, are Shenoute’s confrontations with the local aristocrat Gessios, probably around the year 400.²⁹ During the night,

²⁴ Zach. Myt. V. Sev. (PO 2, pp. 14–44). On the *Life* see most recently Watts (2005), who has successfully placed the section on Paralius in the literary context of the work as a whole.

²⁵ See now Emmel (2008).

²⁶ The first reference is found in a lectionary containing parts of Shenoute’s works (CSCO 42, p. 91); the second reference comes from Shenoute’s *De iudicio*, the text of which is found in Behlmer (1996) 113–14; and the third reference is Shenoute *Let Our Eyes* fr. 2.10–11 (ed. Emmel (2008) 197). See further on these passages, with more detailed references, Emmel (2008) 162–65.

²⁷ Same lectionary as previous footnote (CSCO 42, p. 91), with corrections by Emmel (2008) 166.

²⁸ *Life of Shenoute* 84 (CSCO 41, p. 41). See on these texts Emmel (2008) 165, esp. the cautionary remarks in n.15.

²⁹ On the date, see Emmel (2002) 111–13, reiterated in Emmel (2008) 181.

Shenoute is said to have invaded his house with some monks and robbed him of the idols he kept inside.³⁰

With the *Life of Shenoute* we come to speak of Egyptian hagiographical works mentioning temple and idol destruction. In Egyptian hagiography, such motifs are actually not found before the 5th c. In the Greek *Life of Antony* (ca. 356), for example, the conflict between ‘pagans’ and Christians is expressed merely in a conversation between Antony and some philosophers.³¹ The first account of an idol destruction by a holy man is found in the Greek *History of the Monks in Egypt* (ca. 400). It contains the story of Apollo of Hermopolis who, with some fellow monks, disturbed a procession of a wooden statue from some village by ‘freezing’ its people and priests. After they had been released they all converted to Christianity and burnt the idol.³²

It seems that this passage from the *History of the Monks* might have had an influence on later, more violent, stories of idol and temple destructions in Coptic saints’ lives, which begin with the *Life of Shenoute* in the second half of the 5th c.³³ For example, from the 6th c. (or later) we have two saints’ lives in which holy men assault temples. The first is the *Panegyric on Macarius* (not before the early 6th c.), in which this bishop of Tkow (that is, the city of Antaeopolis) goes against a temple to Kothos in a certain village, to whom children are sacrificed. The holy man attacks the temple with some notables but is captured, after which, significantly, Shenoute’s successor Besa rescues them with some monks. The temple, the high priest, whose name is Homer, and his idols are set on fire. Many people then convert and more idols are burnt.³⁴ Another lively story comes from the *Life of Moses* (after ca. 550) in which this abbot of a monastery at Abydos is said to have definitively eradicated the local traditional cults, first by destroying a temple of Apollo and four other temples and killing thirty priests, followed by the conversion

³⁰ Recently Emmel (2008) 190–97 has added some fragments to Shenoute’s *Let Our Eyes*, which is an open letter to the citizens of Panopolis about the affair, and he provides for the first time an edition of the three known manuscripts. Other references to the Gessios affair are found in Shenoute’s works: e.g., in the above-mentioned (n. 26) lectionary (CSCO 42, pp. 91–92), and in the *Life of Shenoute* 125–26 (CSCO 41, p. 57). See on Gessios, Emmel (2002) 99–113 and Emmel (2008) 166–81.

³¹ Ath. V. Ant. 74–80 (SC 400, pp. 324–40).

³² *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 8.24–29.

³³ See for this suggestion Dijkstra (2008) 91–92.

³⁴ *Panegyric on Macarius* 5.1–11 (CSCO 415, pp. 29–40).

of the priests' children and the rest of the people, and then by assaulting a demon called Bes with a group of monks in another temple.³⁵

This brief overview shows that temple destruction is a common theme in the Christian literature (and the case of Eunapius indicates that it even occurs in non-Christian literature) concerning late antique Egypt. With a broader framework of violence against temples in the rest of the Mediterranean in mind, many studies have assumed on the basis of such accounts, even allowing for literary distortions, that temples were destroyed (and converted) on a large scale in Egypt as well.³⁶ In some recent studies, attempts have been made to support this assumption with archaeological material, such as by pointing at intentionally damaged reliefs in many Egyptian temples and destroyed cult statues found in excavations.³⁷ The problem with the defaced reliefs is that they are extremely hard to date, and that they might not all date back to a time of religious frenzy in Late Antiquity.³⁸ Furthermore, more attention should be paid to less ideological motivations for touching the reliefs, especially in the context of later reuse of the building. For example, Peter Grossmann has shown that in the transformation of the Temple of Isis at Philae into a church of St. Stephen in the 6th c., it depended on a first phase that made the *pronaos* ready for use as a church which reliefs were still visible and consequently hacked out (see further below).³⁹ As for the evidence for deliberately destroyed cult images, it is so slight that a generalisation that religious violence was widespread in Egypt can hardly be based on it. Besides, as we will see below, the archaeological material from Egypt as a whole speaks against such a generalisation.⁴⁰

³⁵ *Life of Moses* (ed. Till, vol. 2, pp. 49–51, 52–54).

³⁶ Most recently Frankfurter (1998) 265: "the gutting and conversion of traditional Egyptian temples, often still functioning, was a widespread phenomenon in Egypt during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries"; Sauer (2003) 100: "To judge by the written sources, Christian image destruction was no less prevalent in Egypt than elsewhere."

³⁷ Damaged reliefs: Sauer (2003) 89–101. Destroyed statues: Frankfurter (2008) 135, referring to Rodziewicz (1991).

³⁸ This is acknowledged by Sauer (2003) 98–100.

³⁹ Grossmann (1984) 109–10, and (2008) 318, not acknowledged by Frankfurter (2008) 135. Even the hacking away of the visible reliefs was unsystematic, see Grossmann (1995) 192.

⁴⁰ A related generalisation that is often made on the basis of these stories is that, because monks are frequently mentioned in them, they were also responsible for the most violent of actions against temples (e.g., Frankfurter (1998) 283). However, Brakke (2006) 216–26, (2008) has shown that the attitude of monks towards temples as described in monastic literature was in fact more complex. On the basis especially of the 5th c. Greek *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, he points out that temples are referred to in other monastic literature as temporary dwelling places to practise, advance or perfect the monastic life by means of the struggle with demons, and in some rare

If we assume, rather, that religious violence was exceptional in late antique Egypt and handle the literary accounts with proper caution, what is left of the events they describe? In the case of the accounts of the destruction of the temples at Atripe and Canopus in the 4th and Menouthis in the 5th c., even though there is no reason to doubt that they describe real events, it is almost impossible to say what exactly happened because we do not have other types of evidence with which to confirm them. In the case of the temple at Atripe, we do not even know which temple it was that was 'destroyed'.⁴¹ As a result of the progress that has recently been made in studying what little is left of the site of the Serapeum, we are somewhat better informed here. No new building foundations have been found on the temple terrain dating to the 4th c. or later. This circumstance makes it unlikely that a church was built here as we would expect some trace of it to remain in the archaeological record. Moreover, the temple building would not have lent itself easily for reuse as a church, as Sozomen claims. Christian buildings, including a late 4th c. structure, have been discovered to the west of the temple area, which seems to be in agreement with Rufinus' statement of a church built on one side of it. If there was a church to the west of the temple area, Sozomen's church, named after the Emperor Arcadius, could well have been this church.⁴² To what extent the temple itself was destroyed in 392 will probably remain unknown. The colonnaded court of the temple remained standing until Arab times, and it seems likely that the temple was only gradually dismantled for building material after the late 4th c. riots.⁴³

With the Coptic saints' lives we enter much less reliable territory, for they have several motifs and, especially in the later lives, a similar

cases monks even lived in temples. Temples were therefore not only objects of rage in monastic literature, and this no doubt reflects a more generally ambivalent attitude in monastic circles.

⁴¹ Emmel (2008) 164, who speculates that the temple might have been the one of Triphis.

⁴² McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes (2004) 107–10; McKenzie (2007) 246. The remark by Hahn (2008b) 351 (n. 50) that the recent archaeological investigations of the Serapeum site "provide nothing new" dismisses important evidence.

⁴³ Grossmann (2002b) 44–45; McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes (2004) 108, and McKenzie (2007) 247 mention a block with a dedicatory inscription to Sarapis found on the site, which was reused as a support for a chancel screen or similar structure. Cf. Grossmann (1995) 188–89, who still speaks of a "complete destruction" of the temple, and Grossmann (2008a) 300–302, 313, who doubts that the building was completely destroyed but, following Sozomen, ascribes its preservation thanks to the church of Arcadius, allegedly built inside the temple.

structure in common: a holy man arrives on the scene with a gang (usually of monks) and destroys an idol or temple by burning or smashing it. The result of this demonstration of power is usually mass conversion to Christianity. The connection between the *Life* (and works) of Shenoute and the *Panegyric on Macarius* is even explicitly made by introducing Besa, the supposed author of the *Life*, into the story of the temple destruction as having been sent by a dying Shenoute. Similarly, in the *Life of Moses*, Shenoute prophesies on his deathbed that Moses is going to eradicate the traditional practices and temples at Abydos.⁴⁴ Finally, stock features such as the ‘pagans’ sacrificing children to their gods should alert us in extracting historical data from these texts. They were all written after the events they are describing and at a time, especially the later examples, when Egypt had become definitively Christian. Consequently, they should in the first place be taken for what they are, literary works with an ideological agenda, in which a Christian author and his audience looked back on a ‘pagan’ past and explained this past from that contemporary perspective. Even if these accounts may contain ‘authentic details’, it seems very unlikely, at least in the case of the later saints’ lives, that the temple and idol destructions they describe reflect real events.⁴⁵

In sum, literary works have often been used to make generalising statements concerning religious violence against temples and temple reuse as churches in Egypt but the problematic nature of these works has not always been recognised fully. True, in some cases these accounts are important, if distorted, witnesses to dramatic events, and that religious violence did occur at this time cannot be denied. But for the complete picture, we also have to take into account other types of evidence, especially archaeology. As we will see in the next section, these sources indicate that the few cases where destruction or reuse as churches can be assumed are in the minority.

⁴⁴ *Life of Moses* (ed. Moussa, pp. 9–10 with Amélineau, vol. 2, p. 682). In both the accounts in the *Panegyric on Macarius* and the *Life of Moses*, the *Life* (and works) of Shenoute is clearly taken as a model, see Brakke (2006) 222–23, (2008) 108–109.

⁴⁵ Dijkstra (2008) 93. See for important discussions, on the basis of the hagiographical works mentioned, on whether hagiography can be used as a historical source for reconstructing traditional Egyptian religion in Late Antiquity the contributions by Frankfurter, Van der Vliet and Van Minnen in Dijkstra and Van Dijk (2006b) 13–37, 39–55, and 57–91. Frankfurter (2006) tends to emphasise the ‘authentic details’ preserved in saints’ lives, whereas Van der Vliet (2006) and Van Minnen (2006) focus more on hagiography as an important source for how Christians looked back on the ‘pagan’ past.

Redressing the Balance: Inscriptions, Papyri and Archaeological Remains

Inscriptions, papyri and material remains are not always taken into account sufficiently in discussions of the fate of the temples in late antique Egypt, but they can provide us with important insights into what happened with them. As we have seen, (Christian) literature almost exclusively focuses on dramatic stories of temple destruction; we hear virtually nothing of what was going on inside temples and when reuse is mentioned (for instance, in the case of the Serapeum at Alexandria), it is as a church. As we will see, the other types of evidence can tell us more about what the situation inside temples was at this time, they usually suggest that the choice to reuse temples was pragmatic rather than ideological, and show us that many temples either fell into ruin (through abandonment) or were reused for purposes other than churches.

In fact, the best work to date on the fate of the temples in Egypt has been done by the papyrologist Roger Bagnall, precisely on the basis of inscriptions, papyri and archaeological remains.⁴⁶ In contrast to the impression one might get from Christian literature, where temples are portrayed as still very much alive far into Late Antiquity,⁴⁷ Bagnall concludes from his evidence that the economic foundation of the temples had been severely weakened by the early 4th c. He ascribes this not to Christianity but rather to internal causes that can be traced back to the early imperial period. Whereas Bagnall's reconstruction has been widely accepted, David Frankfurter has drawn our attention to the fact that traditional religious rituals and practices could still continue on a local or regional level into Late Antiquity, mostly away from the temple in such contexts as the domestic sphere, but sometimes also in the temples themselves, even after regular temple cults had ceased to exist.⁴⁸ At first

⁴⁶ Bagnall (1988) and (1993) 261–68, with many more examples than space allows to discuss here.

⁴⁷ For this tendency in Christian literature, with reference to the *Panegyric on Macarius*, see Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008) 11.

⁴⁸ Frankfurter (1998) esp. 27–30. Most reviewers agree that Frankfurter's study gives a more dynamic picture of what happened to traditional religious rituals and practices in late antique Egypt than Bagnall does, who sees the 4th c. as a religious void (for criticism on this point, see also Carrié (1995) 324). On the other hand, Frankfurter has been criticised (e.g., by Kaper (2001)) for going too far in the opposite direction by emphasising—mostly on the basis of hagiographical works—the “resilience, indeed the triumph of local culture” (p. 284). A good example is pp. 66–70, where he argues for the popular defence of temples into the 4th and 5th c. on the basis of passages from Coptic saints' lives. One of these passages is from the *Life of Aaron* (ed. Budge, p. 446), which mentions an old woman reporting to the temple priest that in his absence

sight, the views of these two scholars may seem divergent, but for our purposes they can best be used in a complementary fashion.⁴⁹

In his study Bagnall has provided us with an important framework with which to view the fate of the temples in Egypt, as it accounts for the fact that many temples were already abandoned or reused before the 4th c. and explains why it would have been increasingly hard to maintain those temples that were not already abandoned or reused in the course of the 4th c. (which in turn explains why most evidence we have for still functioning temples in late antique Egypt is restricted to this century). The advantage of this model is further that it contradicts the picture of Christian literary works that temples were still very much alive—and therefore a potential object of rage for holy men—throughout Late Antiquity; if the temples were more dead than alive at the beginning of the period, this allows us to see the fate of the temples in late antique Egypt rather in practical terms, that is, in a context in which new purposes had to be found for the many buildings that were no longer functioning.⁵⁰ At the same time we can learn from Frankfurter's study that the end of the temple's infrastructure may not exclude the possibility that groups of people remained attracted to the sites, in whatever form, sometimes centuries after the regular cults had ceased to exist (see for example the case of Deir el-Bahari below).

With this framework in mind, I would like to discuss here two important ways in which inscriptions and papyri contribute to the study of the fate of the temples: the information they provide about the ceasing of cultic practices inside temples and the various methods of reusing the temples. In those cases where we have (approximate) dates about the ceasing of cults and later reuse, we might even be able to calculate the intermediate period between the end of regular cults in a temple and its reuse for another purpose.

In almost every temple precinct in the Nile valley a substantial amount of inscriptions can be found, ranging from the highly official

Macedonius has killed the holy falcon of Philae. As I have argued (Dijkstra (2008) 267–68, with improved text and translation; see also Dijkstra (2007a) 197), this passage is part of a literary strategy to depict a past in which everything was still the other way round (i.e., 'pagan') in order to contrast that past sharply with the conversion of the entire island to Christianity that takes place soon afterwards (significantly, the old woman is the last on the island to be converted). This passage can therefore hardly be taken as evidence for the popular defence of temples (*pace* Frankfurter (1998) 68).

⁴⁹ See Dijkstra (2008) 19–22.

⁵⁰ Bagnall (2008) 39.

to those that are less official—either scratched in (graffiti) or painted (*dipinti*). Since these inscriptions were usually left by the temple personnel and visitors to the temple, they give us a wealth of information about the religious rituals and practices within these structures.⁵¹ It is not always recognised that the last-dated inscription from a temple can provide us with at least a rough estimation of when regular cultic activity ceased. True, the last-dated inscription should not be taken too readily as an absolute date, for usually only a certain percentage of the inscriptions is dated, not all of them might have been preserved and we have to allow for the fact that temple cults might have continued a little longer or at a lower level of organization. But in many cases it is plausible that it would not have been much longer, so these inscriptions can provide us with a good idea as to when the regular cults at a temple came to an end. A case in point is provided by the stelae from the Bucheum in Hermonthis (Armant), which contain dedications in hieroglyphics to the sacred Buchis bull venerated there. Since the last of these stelae dates to 340, it can be assumed that the cult of the sacred bull came to an end not long afterwards.⁵²

More common than inscriptions on movable objects like the stelae from Hermonthis, however, are the usually hundreds of inscriptions on temple walls. Several examples can be given of what the last-dated wall inscription can tell us about the ceasing of the cults at a temple site, but I will give here only two particularly illustrative examples. In these cases, a combination of inscriptions and archaeological remains also indicates the manner in which the buildings were reused. The first example is the great Temple of Amun at Thebes (Luxor). From excavations and inscriptions we know that it was turned into a military camp under the Emperor Diocletian in 301/302.⁵³ The earlier Greek visitors' inscriptions found on the site suggest that the temple had ceased activity by the time it was reused.⁵⁴ In this case, a combination of epigraphic and archaeological data tells us that this temple had already been abandoned before Late Antiquity and

⁵¹ A model study of the temple at Deir el-Bahari in the Graeco-Roman period, on the basis of Greek inscriptions, is Lajtar (2006), on which see Dijkstra (2009a).

⁵² Grenier (1983); Dijkstra (2008) 126. For the late stelae from Hermonthis, see also Grenier (2002) and (2003).

⁵³ el-Saghir *et al.* (1986).

⁵⁴ For the inscriptions see the edition by G. Wagner in el-Saghir *et al.* (1986) 99–122, on which see Bingen (1986): the visitors' inscriptions date to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, with the last dates in the 2nd c. A.D. (e.g., no. 15). See also Bagnall (1993) 263; McKenzie (2007) 314; Dijkstra (2008) 126.

was reused for military purposes from the start of this period onwards. Only later, from the end of the 6th c. onwards, were churches built on the temple terrain and even then they were built away from the (formerly) most sacred areas of the Temple of Amun.⁵⁵

Another good example is the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, on the West Bank at Thebes, where a cult of Amenhotep and Imhotep thrived in the Graeco-Roman period. The last visitors' inscriptions in Greek date to the mid 2nd c. There are twelve more inscriptions from the period between 283 and 333/34, but they are different in character and at least half of them belong to a corporation of ironworkers from Hermonthis (Armant) who came to the site each year to sacrifice a donkey during a traditional festival. On the basis of these data the editor has concluded that regular cultic activity at the temple ceased by the mid 2nd c., with the later inscriptions indicating the attraction of some groups, if not one group, to the site more than a century later.⁵⁶ As we know from inscriptions and archaeological remains, after these cultic activities had ceased in or shortly after *ca.* 333/34 the temple was eventually reused as a monastery (the monastery of St. Phoibammon) from the late 6th c. onwards.⁵⁷

Papyri can also give us an idea as to when approximately temples were abandoned and for what purposes they were reused, but it is not usually possible to connect them directly to the archaeological or architectural context of the temple, as with inscriptions. Hence, they only provide us with a snapshots of these aspects of the fate of the temples.⁵⁸ An exception, where we do find papyri in an archaeological context, is the site of the main temple (of Tutu) at Kellis (Ismant el-Kharab) in the Dakhla Oasis. In this temple several 3rd and 4th c. papyri have been found, of which a large

⁵⁵ Grossmann (1995) 193, and (2002b) esp. 448–54 (nos. A 43–46); McKenzie (2007) 314–15.

⁵⁶ Lajtar (2006) 94–103, who comments on the sudden disappearance of inscriptions after the mid 2nd c.: “The possibility of a change in the customs of the visitors, who might have suddenly stopped leaving inscriptions, is surely to be ruled out.” See also his commentary on the later group of inscriptions, nos. 157, 160–64, 166–69, 172–73. Bagnall (1993) 263 already suggested that the temple was not in regular operation any more by the 3rd/4th c.; see also Dijkstra (2008) 126, 216–17.

⁵⁷ Godlewski (1986) esp. 60–78; Lajtar (2006) 103; Grossmann (2008a) 317.

⁵⁸ Cf. Bagnall (1988) 290: “On observe (...) que les papyrus sont remarquablement avarés de renseignements sur les temples et les prêtres après le milieu du III^e siècle. Même les documents qui existent ne nous renseignent pas bien sur l'état des temples.” An example is the archive of Ammon, which provides us with interesting details about a priestly family in Panopolis in the first half of the 4th c., of which the younger generation turned away from the priesthood towards careers in administration. These papyri are important witnesses to the changing attitudes towards the traditional cults at this time, but temples are not mentioned. On this archive see Van Minnen (2002).

proportion probably belonged to a temple archive. Many of these short, and often fragmentary, texts mention the priest Stonios, who is attested up to 311. Since this is the last date among the papyri from the temple, it must have been functioning until at least this date. It is tempting to assume that the temple remained open a little longer, since Stonios can probably be identified with the priest Aurelius Stonios, son of Tepnachthes, mentioned in another papyrus from a house in Kellis that dates to 335, but the reference to the priest does not necessarily say anything about the functioning of the temple. Be this as it may, the evidence from the papyri conforms to the archaeological evidence, which suggests that the temples at Kellis fell out of use in the course of the 4th c.⁵⁹

Papyri also incidentally provide clues about different methods of temple reuse, including some rare cases of secular reuse. As examples of the latter, two cases from Oxyrhynchus can be adduced.⁶⁰ A number of papyri attest that the Hadrianeum was in use as a prison and for court hearings in the 4th c. The evidence includes a letter by a certain Heraclides, who remarks that he is imprisoned in the building.⁶¹ A lease of a room (*symposion*) in a house within the Temple of Thoeiris, dated to 462, tells us that this temple was used for domestic purposes at that time.⁶² Finally, some examples show the reuse of temples as churches or Christian shrines. For instance, another lease, this time from Hermopolis Magna and dated to 555, mentions a martyr's shrine built in a Serapeum.⁶³

Inscriptions and papyri can thus tell us much about when temple cults came to an end. In some of these cases, this happened before the 4th c. (Thebes (Luxor)), in other cases there is evidence for regular or incidental cultic activity into the 4th c. (Hermonthis, Kellis; Deir el-Bahari). Inscriptions and papyri also provide examples of a variety of methods of

⁵⁹ For the papyri from the main temple, see Worp (2002), esp. 334, which collects the evidence for Stonios/Aurelius Stonios, son of Tepnachthes. The papyrus dating to A.D. 335 is *P.Kellis* 1.13 (for papyrological abbreviations see Oates *et al.* (2001)). There are two papyri (Worp (2002) nos. 12d and e) containing dates after A.D. 311, but they were found elsewhere on the temple terrain and it is doubtful whether they can be connected to the temple cult. I would like to thank Klaas Worp for discussion of these texts. For the archaeological evidence, see Hope in Bagnall (1997) 12.

⁶⁰ Cf. Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008) 8.

⁶¹ *P.Oxy.* 17.2154.14–15. For the doorkeepers (of the prison?) of the Hadrianeum, attested in several 4th c. documents and for the court hearings held in the temple in the 4th c., see the most recent update of references in the note to *P.Oxy.* 71.4827.3 (I owe this reference to Nikolaos Gonis). Cf. Bagnall (1988) 290.

⁶² *PSI* 3.175, on which see Bagnall (2008) 24 (n.6), who criticises Frankfurter (1998) 122, for taking this passage as evidence that the temple was in use for ritual banquets (the word *symposion* refers to a room, not a religious banquet).

⁶³ *P.Horak* 10, with the comments of Bagnall (2008) 24 (n.6).

reuse: we have seen reuse of temples as a military camp (Thebes (Luxor)), monastery (Deir el-Bahari), prison and courthouse (Oxyrhynchus), apartment building (Oxyrhynchus) and martyr's shrine (Hermopolis). As we have seen, the most detailed picture of these aspects of the fate of the temples can be gained by combining inscriptions and papyri, and archaeological remains. Although on its own archaeological evidence can only give us an approximation of when cults ceased to exist (for instance, at Kellis), it does provide us with the most complex picture of the way in which temples were reused in Late Antiquity, because the actual building and its surrounding structures can be investigated in detail.

During his many years of archaeological work on various sites in Egypt, Peter Grossmann has collected a wealth of evidence for the reuse of temples.⁶⁴ Although he allows for several temple destructions caused by religious frenzy in the initial period (4th to the first half of 5th c.), based on literary sources, he is well aware that these were exceptional.⁶⁵ When temples seem to have been 'destroyed', the archaeological record shows that this was not from religious motivations but rather aimed at retrieving the valuable building material.⁶⁶ For example, in one of the rare cases in which a complete temple was dismantled, the Ptolemaic temple at Hermopolis Magna, the building blocks were reused for the foundations of a large transept basilica that was built on the spot not before the end of the 5th c.⁶⁷ The situation at Tentyris (Dendara) was different, where the main temple remained intact. However, another sacred building within the temple precinct, the Birthhouse, was partly dismantled and its building blocks reused for a triconch church that was built beside it in the second half of the 5th or the 6th c.⁶⁸ Blocks could also be transported from dismantled temples to other sites, as happened at the main church of the Shenoute Monastery at Atripe (first half of 5th c.), in which *spolia* from a temple or temples in the surrounding area were reused.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ The key synthesis is Grossmann (1995), of which Grossmann (2002b) 43–48 is a summary, mainly focusing on churches built in temples, and of which Grossmann (2008a) is an update with several additional remarks and examples.

⁶⁵ Grossmann (1995) 185: "Sonderfälle", (2002b) 44–45, (2008a) 307.

⁶⁶ Grossmann (1995) 190–91, (2008a) 309–12.

⁶⁷ Grossmann (1995) 189–90, (2002b) esp. 441–43 (no. A 39); McKenzie (2007) esp. 284–86, 312–13; Grossmann (2008a) 306. Note that Grossmann dates the church to around the mid 5th c.

⁶⁸ Grossmann (1995) 192, (2002b) 443–46 (no. A 40); McKenzie (2007) esp. 282–83; Grossmann (2008a) 307, 310, 314. Grossmann dates the church to the early 6th c.

⁶⁹ Grossmann (1995) 190, (2002b) esp. 528–36 (no. B 25); McKenzie (2007) 272–79; Grossmann (2008a) 310, 323; Grossmann (2008b) esp. 37 (n. 6) and 53 (n. 89): the blocks cannot have been from the Temple of Triphis at Atripe.

These examples show that the reuse of temple blocks as building material, a practice that goes back to pharaonic times, was commonplace in late antique Egypt. Depending on the demand, parts of the former building were taken out and this gradual process of recycling building material could continue for centuries. The result of the process was no doubt that many temples have been lost or have left few remains, especially in areas where there has been a continuous settlement from Antiquity to the present (the Serapeum at Alexandria is a good example of this). But not all temples were reused for building material. The temples of Tentyris (Dendara) and Apollinopolis Magna (Edfu) remained virtually untouched and are among the best preserved temples in Egypt, perhaps because they lay outside of the main inhabited areas.⁷⁰

Only in exceptional cases were the temples that were not reused for building material or other purposes turned into churches, usually at a later time (as elsewhere from the second half of the 5th c. onwards). We have already seen the only known case from Egypt of a temple that was completely dismantled, after which its building blocks were reused for the foundations of a church that was built on the spot (Hermopolis Magna), and an example of a church that was built on the temple terrain leaving the main temple intact but using large parts of the nearby Birthhouse (Tentyris (Dendara)). Relatively numerous examples can be listed of churches that were built inside temples. They have probably been preserved so well exactly because their construction within a temple has a better chance of preservation than, for instance, a temple that was ruined.⁷¹ Nonetheless, these cases show that practical rather than ideological considerations were equally at play here.⁷² In fact, no case is known in which a church made use of the entire space of a standing temple, nor were churches normally built inside the holiest part of the temple where the cult statue stood (*naos*). The reason for this is that the rooms in Egyptian temples usually become narrower and darker, and the floor levels higher, the further one penetrates the building. These circumstances make it impractical to use the *naos*, let alone the whole temple, for a Christian congregation.⁷³

⁷⁰ Grossmann (1995) 191.

⁷¹ A point also made by Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008) 11.

⁷² See Ward-Perkins (1999) 233–40, for some excellent reflections on the tension between pragmatism and ideology involved in the interpretation of two cases of the reuse of temples as churches (the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias and the Parthenon at Athens).

⁷³ Grossmann (1995) 191–92, (2002b) 45, (2008a) 307, 312–13.

In the cases where we do find churches built in temples, the reuse seems to have been limited to certain rooms or spaces of the temple where churches could easily be constructed and/or where good use could be made of the existing architecture. For example, a series of churches were built in the *pronaos* of Egyptian temples so that their columns could be used to divide the church into three or more aisles, as happened with the Khonsu Temple at Karnak (north of Thebes (Luxor)), where a small, three-aisled church was constructed in the *pronaos* by using the two existing rows of columns, and thus changing the orientation from south-north to west-east.⁷⁴ Other churches were built in the forecourts of temples, as happened in the second forecourt of the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu on the other side of the Nile at Thebes (Luxor), where a large five-aisled church was built between the 5th and 7th c. The colonnade of the court was reused in the new building by inserting walls in between the columns; only one column on the eastern side was taken out in the place where the apse was supposed to be situated. In the court itself four rows of new columns were created, while building blocks from the temple were reused to serve as capitals. The church finally received a wooden roof.⁷⁵

In sum, the archaeological evidence, collected by Grossmann, shows that Christian ‘destruction’ of temples was highly uncommon in late antique Egypt and no definite case of it has been found in the archaeological record, even though we know from literary works that it did happen.⁷⁶ Moreover, the most common type of reuse of temples was not as churches but for retrieving building material. Furthermore, archaeology gives us some examples of other forms of reuse, namely of reuse as a military camp (Thebes (Luxor)) and a monastery (Deir el-Bahari and, through spoliation, Atriye). Sometimes temples even remained

⁷⁴ Grossmann (1995) 192–93, (2002b) 46; McKenzie (2007) 315; Grossmann (2008a) 313–14. The large temple complex of Karnak included several more churches, among them a five-aisled church in the Festival Hall of Thutmosis III, and monastic settlements. See Grossmann (1995) 192, (2002b) esp. 46; McKenzie (2007) 315; Grossmann (2008a) 312, 315.

⁷⁵ Grossmann (1995) 193, (2002b) 455–57 (no. A 48); McKenzie (2007) 315; Grossmann (2008a) 314. Grossmann dates the church more specifically to the 5th c. The church in the second court of the temple should be seen in the context of the settlement that occupied the walled temple precinct in Late Antiquity (the Coptic town of Djeme), as it had done since the 11th c. B.C. Apparently, other parts of the temple were in use for housing in Late Antiquity. See Wilfong (2002) 3–13.

⁷⁶ Habachi (1972), responding to an article by O’Leary (1938), already came to the same conclusion but on the basis of much less evidence.

untouched (Tentyris (Dendara), Apollinopolis Magna (Edfu)). If temples or temple precincts were reused as churches, this happened usually at a later time and was done from practical rather than ideological considerations (Hermopolis Magna, Tentyris, Karnak, Medinet Habu).

As with papyri and inscriptions, the archaeological record collected by Grossmann thus confirms the framework constructed by Bagnall as it shows that the fate of the temples in late antique Egypt was more a question of recycling than of religious violence. Nevertheless, the examples Grossmann mentions still mostly consist of temples being turned into churches, which is understandable because this kind of reuse is usually quite visible in the archaeological record and most of his work on the reuse of temples derives from an interest in Christian architecture.⁷⁷ As we have seen, Grossmann also mentions several examples of other methods of reuse and he is well aware that reuse of temples for building material was a common phenomenon, but it seems that more local or regional studies are needed to lay bare the ‘negative evidence’ (in this case, temples not turned into churches), especially temples reused for quarrying purposes. The following study of the First Cataract region shows that ample such examples can be added to the list as a result of systematic excavations.

Before we do that, however, one cautionary remark should be made about the archaeological evidence. As Bagnall has expressed it, “archaeology is generally a blunt weapon” and it would be wrong to suppose that archaeological evidence can provide us with the complete picture of what happened to the temples in Late Antiquity—far from it.⁷⁸ We have already come across some of the problems with the archaeological data, such as that temples reused as churches usually have a better chance of preservation than other methods of reuse. Other biases are, for example, that in some cases we have to rely on earlier, incomplete excavation reports, if such reports exist at all; not every site in Egypt is excavated, sites may be lost and some sites have been excavated more thoroughly than others; not to speak of problems of dating and interpretation.⁷⁹ Ideally, then, a regional study of temple reuse should take into account all types of sources discussed thus far, as will also be done in what follows. Yet archaeological evidence does provide the most detailed evidence for

⁷⁷ This is evident, for example, from his 2002 study of Christian architecture in Egypt, in which only examples of churches built in temples are treated.

⁷⁸ Bagnall (1993) 264. See also Bagnall (2008) 34.

⁷⁹ The latter point is also made by Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008) 10.

a variety of methods of reuse and therefore it should not surprise that it will serve as the main body of evidence.

THE FATE OF THE TEMPLES IN THE FIRST CATARACT REGION:
A CASE STUDY

The First Cataract is the first in a series of cataracts, or currents, in the Nile one encounters travelling upstream. The river in this area becomes wider but is filled with numerous small islands and shallows, which, together with the currents, made travelling through it by boat in Antiquity almost impossible (see fig. 2 for a map of the region). The Cataract region was considered the natural border between Egypt and its southern neighbour, Nubia, even though the real frontier was usually more to the south. However, according to Procopius, in 298 the Emperor Diocletian withdrew the frontier to the First Cataract region and made the region into a frontier zone.⁸⁰

From pharaonic times, Elephantine had been the main town in the region. The imposing sanctuary of the ram-headed god Khnum towering high above the Nile at Elephantine was the main religious centre of the region and the town was also the capital of the first Upper Egyptian nome (nemes being Egyptian districts). In the Graeco-Roman period things began to change. In the 3rd c. B.C. the Ptolemies built the splendid Temple of Isis on the island of Philae, 4 km to the south, which gradually took over the role of the main religious centre of the region from the Temple of Khnum. In the 3rd or 2nd c. B.C. Omboi (modern Kom Ombo, 40 km to the north) took over Elephantine's role as nome capital, even though the region retained some kind of special administrative status throughout the period. Finally, Syene (modern Aswan) gradually replaced Elephantine as the largest and most important town in the region, until it attained metropolitan status alongside Omboi at the end of the 6th c.⁸¹ Given the strategic position of the region on the southern Egyptian frontier, it is perhaps no wonder that no fewer than two episcopal sees were created there in the 330s, at Syene and Philae (with the bishop of Syene being responsible for Elephantine), even though sees were usually only created in nome capitals.⁸²

⁸⁰ Procop. *Pers.* 1.19.27–37.

⁸¹ For the latter point see Dijkstra and Worp (2006).

⁸² See Dijkstra (2008) 23–35 for a general introduction to the region and pp. 51–56 for its bishops.

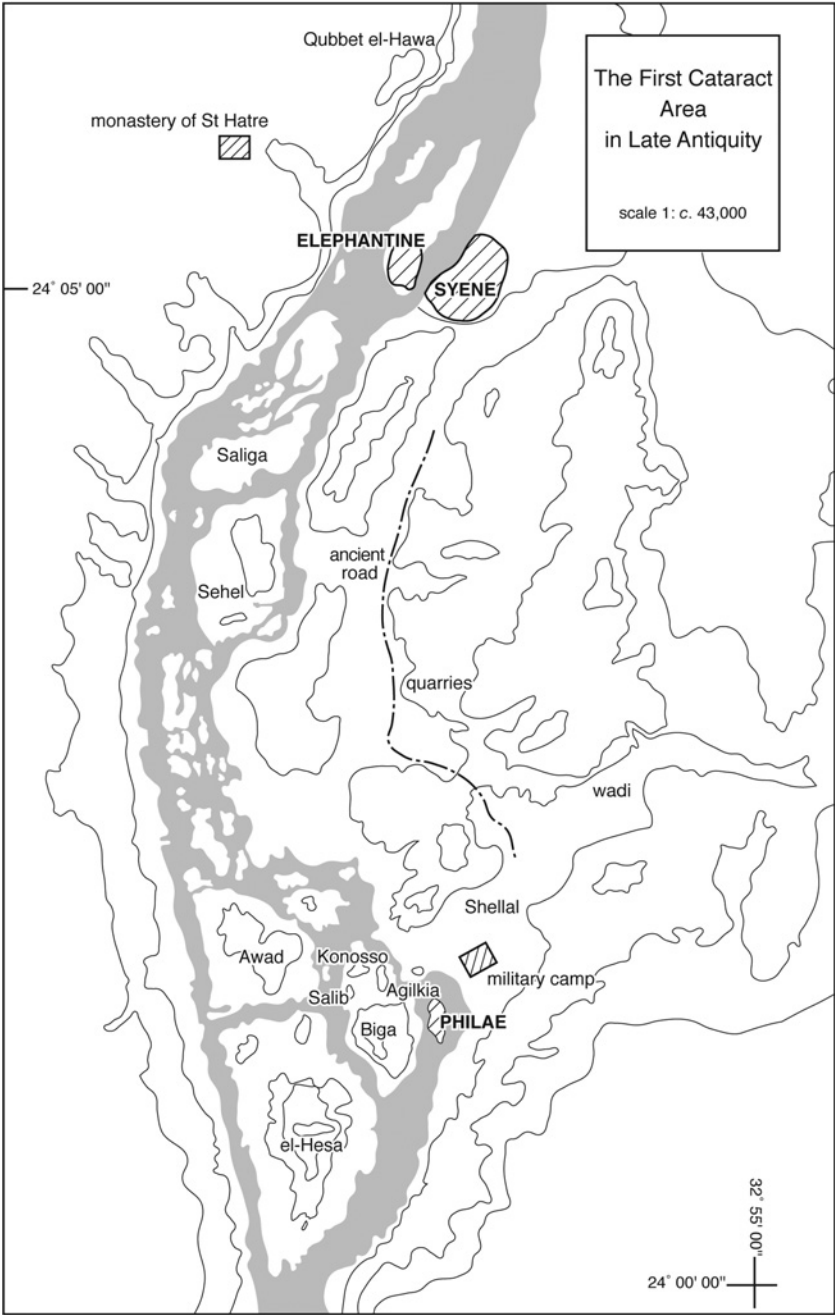


Fig. 2 The First Cataract area in Late Antiquity (Dijkstra (2008) fig. 2).

The sources from this region are rich and include all the types of evidence discussed so far, in other words, they offer an excellent opportunity to conduct a thorough study of the fate of its temples. There are, however, some serious limitations to the evidence, such as that almost all of it comes from or pertains to the three main towns in the region,⁸³ and that the different types of sources are not equally divided among these three towns.⁸⁴ For a study of the fate of the temples, further complications arise such as that the papyri from and concerning this region do not tell us anything about temples;⁸⁵ as for inscriptions and literary works, only the ones from and on Philae give us information about temples in Late Antiquity (some earlier visitors' inscriptions from the Isis Temple at Syene can also be taken into account, see below). Fortunately, the archaeological record for all three sites is sufficient to obtain a detailed impression of the complexity of the issue.⁸⁶ In what follows I would like to discuss what we know about the temples from site to site, starting with Syene and Elephantine, and ending with Philae.⁸⁷

Syene and Elephantine

Syene is one of those sites that has been completely covered by a modern city (Aswan), which leaves little room for the standing remains of temples. The ancient town was abandoned at the end of the Middle Ages and was left in ruins until the 19th c. In the first half of that century the then only visible monument of Syene, the Temple of Domitian (see fig. 3, Area 3), was quarried for building material by a local governor; today only parts of the *pronaos* are still standing.⁸⁸ The city of Aswan, which had developed to the north of the ancient site, then expanded south again and began to incorporate the ruins of Syene.

⁸³ E.g., there is only one other case of temple reuse outside the main centres in the region, the Ptolemaic temple of Biga (an island opposite Philae), which was turned into a church perhaps in the 6th c. (Grossmann (2002a), (2002b) 32, 48), but the remains have now disappeared under water.

⁸⁴ E.g., almost all of the papyri come from Syene, and most of the inscriptions from Philae.

⁸⁵ There is perhaps one exception of a papyrus (*P.Cair.Masp.* 1.67004) that seems to suggest the attraction of a group of Blemmyes to the temples of Philae ca. A.D. 567, for which see below.

⁸⁶ For the sources for the region in Late Antiquity, see Dijkstra (2008) 36–39.

⁸⁷ What follows draws on Dijkstra (2008) 85–122 (chapt. 3) and 306–24.

⁸⁸ Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2004) 122. It is thus hard to say whether the temple was reused or not in Antiquity.

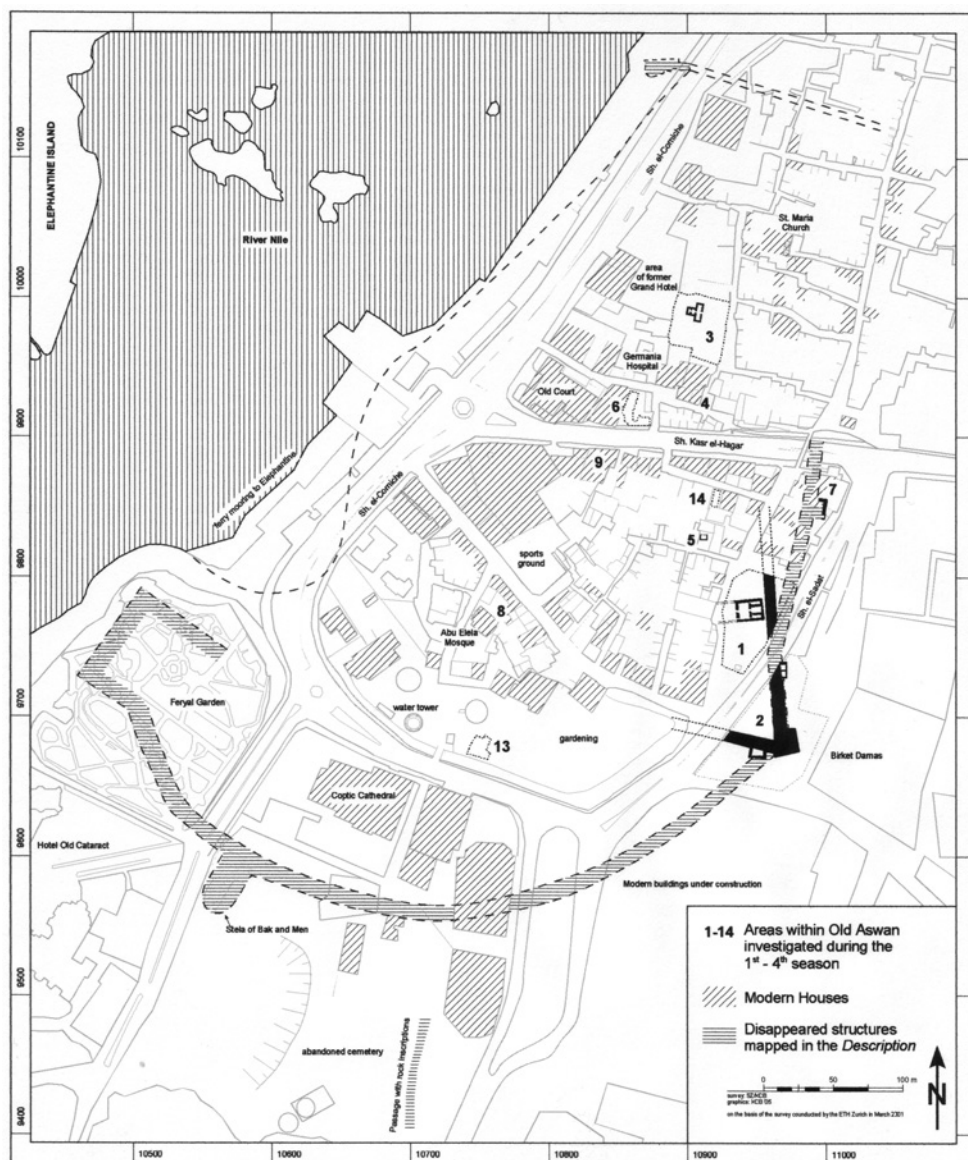


Fig. 3 Archaeological map of Aswan with the areas excavated between 2000 and 2004 (Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2006) fig. 1).

As a result of the redevelopment of 'Old Aswan', as it is now called, several discoveries of ancient remains were made, most notably of the second still visible monument of Aswan, the small, but completely preserved, Temple of Isis (Area 1), which was found under a rubbish heap in 1871. Almost no records were made of these finds at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th c.

A good example of the poor archaeological documentation of this time is the 'Temple of Ptolemy IV' that was discovered in 1907. The site is described in the most general of terms and its location is only approximately given, 30 m south of the Abu Elela mosque, that is, in the area of the water tower (fig. 3). Because objects such as granite columns with crosses and altars had been found, the building was interpreted as having been turned into a church in Christian times. Recently, it has been shown that this interpretation should be revised. Dumped in the Temple of Isis was a group of blocks dating to the reign of Ptolemy IV, but belonging to a temple that once stood on Elephantine ('Temple X'). It is highly likely that these blocks come from the site of the 'Temple of Ptolemy IV', which means that the temple-turned-church was not a temple at all but rather a church that was partly built from blocks of 'Temple X'.⁸⁹ These blocks were cut into smaller pieces, which made them easy to transport across the river.⁹⁰ Other building blocks from temples at Elephantine, notably from the Temple of Khnum, were also found reused in the town wall of Syene.⁹¹

The Temple of Isis remained largely unexplored for a century until an Italian team started systematically working on it in the 1970s. They published the hieroglyphic reliefs, an important map of the temple, some of the graffiti on the temple's walls and the blocks from the surrounding area dumped inside the temple (see above).⁹² Between 1987 and 1993 a team from the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt surveyed the houses built around the Temple of Isis, as well as the town wall behind the temple that led to the south-eastern corner tower of the wall and a stretch of the wall that went in a westerly direction (Area 2).⁹³ In the latter

⁸⁹ Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2004) 123.

⁹⁰ Laskowska-Kusztal (1996) 21.

⁹¹ Jaritz (1986) 40.

⁹² Bresciani and Pernigotti (1978).

⁹³ Jaritz and Rodziewicz (1994) and (1996). For the town wall and general layout of Syene in Late Antiquity, as attested in inscriptions, papyri and material remains, see now Dijkstra (2007b) 185–96, (2008) 70–73.

stretch about 200 blocks were found from a temple dating to the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, which would once have stood nearby. The pottery underneath the wall dates the reuse of the blocks from this temple to the 5th or 6th c.⁹⁴

As a consequence of this successful survey, the Swiss Institute decided in 2000 to start up, in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the first systematic excavations at Aswan. The material from the first six seasons available thus far contains so much information about the late antique period that Aswan has grown into the richest archaeological source for the history of the region in this period.⁹⁵ Much of the work of the first few seasons has concentrated on the excavation of the houses around the Isis Temple (Area I), which date between the 1st and 11th c., but two other projects have been conducted in the temple itself.⁹⁶

The first of these projects is a study of the reuse of the temple as a church. The Italian team had already suggested on the basis of wall paintings and other features inside that the temple was reused as a church in the 6th c.⁹⁷ A closer look at the pavement, the walls and the placement of the Christian graffiti (both figural and textual), as well as the altars still standing in the temple, has resulted in a tentative reconstruction of the ground plan of the church (fig. 4). The reconstruction shows that the Isis Temple at Aswan is the only case from Egypt where a church was built in the *naos* of a former temple, albeit not in the main sanctuary (fig. 4, no. F) but in the hall in front of it (no. D).⁹⁸ When the cultic activities inside the temple ceased is hard to say. The last-dated inscription from the temple walls dates to the second century, but only a small number of published inscriptions from the Isis Temple survive, and it is therefore unsafe to use this date as a cut-off point. If the cult continued after the second century, however, it had no doubt ended by the 4th c. and the temple would have stood empty for a considerable time before it was reused as a church. A second project, in progress of publication, is the edition of the 352 graffiti from the temple's walls, which will give us more information

⁹⁴ Jaritz (1986) 41; Jaritz and Rodziewicz (1994) 117, 120.

⁹⁵ Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2004), (2006) and (2008).

⁹⁶ For the houses see Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2004) 127–34 and Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2006) 238–51.

⁹⁷ Bresciani and Pernigotti (1978) 38–41.

⁹⁸ Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2006) 228–38, and Dijkstra (2008) 99–106. Cf. Grossmann (1995) 194.

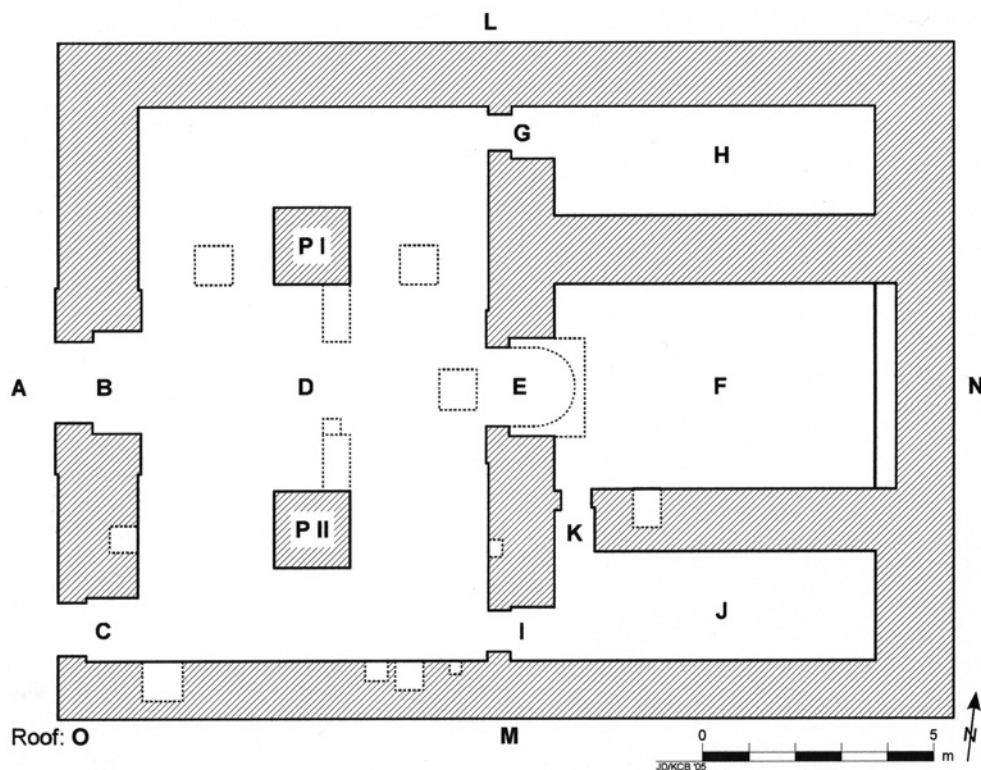


Fig. 4 The Temple of Isis at Aswan with a reconstruction of (parts of) a late antique church (Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2006) fig. 7).

about the activities inside the temple during its long period of service as a religious building.⁹⁹

Apart from the excavations around the Temples of Domitian and Isis (Areas 1 and 3), since 2000 several rescue excavations have been carried out in different parts of Aswan. For our purposes only the emergency excavation north of Kasr el-Hagar Street needs to be mentioned (Area 6). In the late antique phase (5th to 7th c.) two monumental buildings were unearthed along a road, in which building blocks from a temple of Ptolemy VIII were reused. After some remodelling, a cross-shaped baptistery and a martyr's tomb were constructed on the spot with in between these buildings three pharaonic stelae that were reused as pavement slabs (one even with the inscription visible). The combination of

⁹⁹ Dijkstra (in press). For a preliminary report, see Dijkstra (2009c).

the tomb and the baptistery suggests that a major church once stood nearby, perhaps even the cathedral church of Syene.¹⁰⁰

To move on to Elephantine, like Syene, this island was abandoned at the end of the Middle Ages but unlike Syene, it has remained uninhabited ever since. This has resulted in the preservation of an enormous hill ruin (*tell*) with ancient remains of up to 12 m in depth, which in some places contains layers from the medieval Arab all the way down to the predynastic layers. Systematic excavations on this site started in 1969 by the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and are among the most extensive excavation projects in Egypt. Evidently, the top layers in most places consist of the medieval and late antique layers and this circumstance has not always led to perfect preservation. For example, the remains of the so-called 'Christian basilica', which would once have stood on one of the highest parts of the upper town, were found scattered across the island because of either human or natural factors (for a map, see fig. 5). The church may have been the main Christian place of worship of the town and probably dates to the second half of the 6th c.¹⁰¹ On account of these circumstances Late Antiquity is not as well represented as other periods in Elephantine's rich history. Nevertheless, some good work has been done for the period in specific parts of the town, first and foremost at the Temple of Khnum.

Thanks to the work of Peter Grossmann in the 1970s, the Temple of Khnum is the best-documented case of a temple reused for building purposes anywhere in Egypt, as the process can be followed in detail for several centuries.¹⁰² The temple also constitutes one of the few cases where archaeology can give us clues as to when a temple cult came to an end. As a recent study has shown, the houses within the precinct intended for temple personnel were abandoned in or before the 4th c.¹⁰³ As so often, the temple thus stood empty for a considerable time before it was reused. Blocks may have been occasionally removed from this time onwards, but they were systematically reused only in the second quarter of the 5th c. when a large-scale building project took place in the forecourt (either for a military camp or a neighbourhood for the poor). To this end groups of blocks were taken out horizontally depending on what parts were most easily available to the construction workers. Still, until the 6th c., most of the building remained standing,

¹⁰⁰ Von Pilgrim *et al.* (2006) 253–64.

¹⁰¹ Grossmann (1980) 47; Arnold (2003) 26–28.

¹⁰² Grossmann (1980).

¹⁰³ Arnold (2003) 20–21.

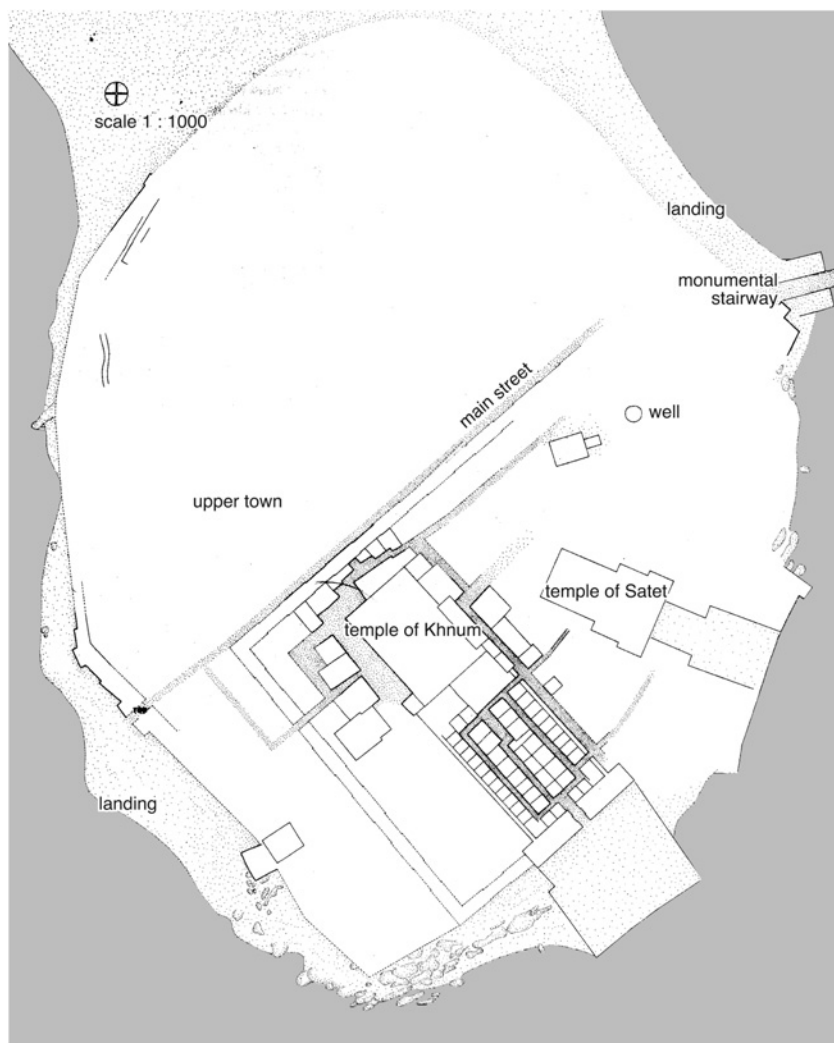


Fig. 5 Elephantine in Late Antiquity (after Arnold (2003) fig. 3; courtesy DAI).

albeit in ruins. This situation changed in the second half of the 6th c. when large parts of the temple were dismantled, such as the *pronaos* and the monumental entrance gate (*pylon*), in order to accommodate large-scale renovations on the forecourt. Also at this time, a square church with a vaulted roof was built in the former *pronaos*, which made use of some of its architectural features.¹⁰⁴

From the beginning, then, the main aim in the reuse of the Temple of Khnum seems to have been the retrieval of its precious building blocks. The blocks were reused for at least two major building projects on the forecourt, where use was also made of the architectural features still present on the site. In addition, individual blocks were reused in the houses that filled the temple precinct on the southern and western sides of the temple in Late Antiquity.¹⁰⁵ As we have seen, other blocks from the temple were transported across the river to form part of the town wall of Syene. Thus the dismantling of the temple was a slow and gradual process that was determined by the different building activities on the temple terrain and even by those at Syene.

Two more temples from Elephantine were systematically dismantled to be reused for large-scale building projects. One of these, 'Temple X', has already been mentioned, as large parts of this temple were reused in a church of unknown date at Syene. The other temple is the so-called 'Temple Y' from which a large group of blocks was reused in a late antique quay wall, which were found during recent excavations between 2000 and 2002. The excavations were carried out in the north-eastern part of the town near a monumental stairway (fig. 5) and the temple would probably have stood nearby. The excavations revealed quay walls that date from the Roman to medieval periods. In Late Antiquity, the walls were renovated several times, the last time in the second half of the 6th c., when use was made of blocks almost exclusively from 'Temple Y'.¹⁰⁶ Probably at about the same time, a church was built on a terrace above the quay walls, which continued the local tradition from pharaonic times of building monumental religious buildings, like the Temples of Khnum and Satet, in these places.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Grossmann (1980) esp. 16–36, who interprets the house blocks as a military camp, cf. Arnold (2003) 20–21, 39–40, who interprets them as intended for social housing. For the technique of dismantling see also Grossmann (2008a) 312, and for the church see also Grossmann (1980) 75–111, (2002b) 38.

¹⁰⁵ E.g., Arnold (2003) 47, in a house built against the back wall of the temple.

¹⁰⁶ Dreyer *et al.* (2002) 200–209.

¹⁰⁷ Dreyer *et al.* (2002) 206–207.

To conclude this section, we have seen that the fate of the temples at Syene and Elephantine was for the most part a process of recycling building material. Blocks from the Temple of Khnum and other temples from Elephantine were transported across the river to serve in the town wall of Syene, and a large part of the Temple of Tiberius from Syene itself was reused in the same wall (in the 5th or 6th c.). At least two large building projects on the forecourt of the Temple of Khnum made use of the building blocks ready at hand (in the 5th and 6th c.). Easily transportable blocks from the dismantled 'Temple X' of Elephantine were reused in a church that was built in Syene, while large parts of 'Temple Y' found a new purpose in a 6th c. quay wall at Elephantine. These large-scale building projects must have been centrally administered and involved a high degree of organisation. In the case of the Temple of Khnum the dismantlement was apparently gradual and took several centuries, whereas in other cases (Temple of Tiberius, 'Temple X', 'Temple Y') the complete temple seems to have been dismantled, after which large numbers of blocks were sent away to construction sites. This difference may be due to the large size of the Temple of Khnum compared to the others. Finally, some blocks from a temple of Ptolemy VIII were reused in the foundations of two monumental buildings in Syene (5th to 7th c.), others from the Temple of Khnum were reused in the houses to the south and west of the temple.

These cases of the reuse of temples for the retrieval of building material are important 'negative evidence' for the idea that temples were often reused as churches. When temple blocks were reused for building material at Syene and Elephantine, in only one case was that to build a church, which shows here too that it was just one of many options. Only in two cases was a church built in or close to a temple. This happened at a later date (the 6th c.), as elsewhere, and, interestingly, with the temples that have retained enough standing remains to say something about their reuse (the Temples of Isis and Khnum). These numbers should warn us against concentrating too much on standing remains as evidence for the reuse of temples, for the examples in which temples were (partly) dismantled and then reused for different purposes put these two cases in perspective. Besides, to focus on the construction of a church in the *pronaos* of the Khnum Temple alone would ignore the whole complex process of the reuse of the temple for building material and the redevelopment of the temple terrain.

A further nuance can be made to the few cases of reuse as churches at Syene and Elephantine, when they are seen in the context of *de novo* church building (the other ‘negative evidence’). Some of these churches have already been introduced in the discussion above: a large church near the baptistery and martyr’s tomb (5th to 7th c.) and the church made partly of building blocks of ‘Temple X’ (of unknown date) at Syene, and the ‘Christian basilica’ and church on top of the quay wall at Elephantine (both second half of 6th c.). From papyri from Syene and ostraka from Elephantine we know that both towns had several churches in at least the 5th and 6th c.¹⁰⁸ Some of the churches may overlap with the archaeologically attested ones,¹⁰⁹ but still these cases show that both towns had a significant number of churches, among which the two cases in which churches were built in or nearby temples formed an exception. Thus the evidence shows that the sacred landscape did not remain focused on the same temples. Several of them were dismantled or quarried and only a few temples received churches later on. At the same time the new, freestanding churches that were built shifted the focus to other places in the sacred landscape. Having established a complex picture of the fate of the temples in Syene and Elephantine mostly on the basis of archaeological remains, let us finally have a look at the temple island of Philae.

Philae

The archaeological record of late antique Philae is again a completely different story from that of Syene and Elephantine. In 1895/96, the island was ‘excavated’ in preparation for the building of the first Aswan Dam, which would partly submerge the island.¹¹⁰ The ‘excavation’ consisted of the removal of the mud brick houses dating to the late antique and medieval periods that covered the entire island, including the temples. Even though a good map was made which contained the ground plans of the houses (fig. 6), the excavators left hardly any

¹⁰⁸ The evidence is collected in Dijkstra (2008) 53, 73–75, 81–82, with a summary on p. 85. There is no evidence for freestanding churches before the 5th c., but generally evidence for 4th c. freestanding churches in Egypt is poorly represented in the archaeological record, which does not mean that they were not there, see Grossmann (2002b) 4–5.

¹⁰⁹ E.g., the episcopal church of Syene, attested in the papyri, could be the church that would have stood near the baptistery and martyr’s tomb in Area 6.

¹¹⁰ Lyons (1896).

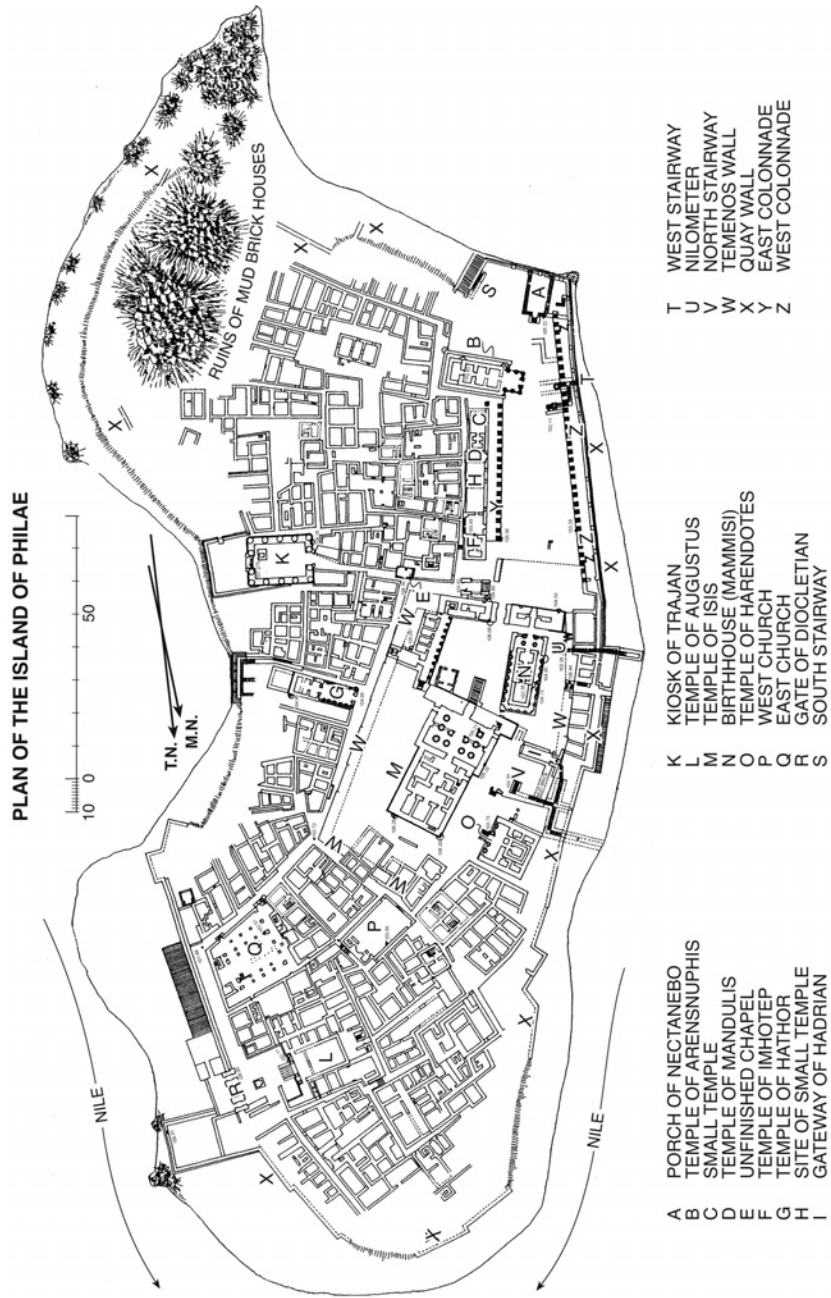


Fig. 6 Archaeological map of Philae before the transferral of its temples to Agilkia (after Lyons (1896) pl. 1).

documentation of the finds. Moreover, when the Aswan High Dam was built in the 1970s, which would completely submerge the island, the temples were transferred to the nearby island of Agilkia, but the remains of two late antique freestanding churches, the East and West Church, were left under water. For a study of the fate of the temples at Philae on the basis of material evidence we therefore have to rely on the traces left in the standing remains of the temples, supplemented by the scanty notes left by early visitors and the excavators.

Philae has always been regarded as an exceptional case and this is, to some extent, correct. For many centuries the temple island attracted peoples from the south and therefore the Romans openly tolerated its cults into the 5th c. to maintain the fragile stability on the southern Egyptian frontier.¹¹¹ At Philae we find the last-dated hieroglyphic (A.D. 394) and demotic (A.D. 452) inscriptions from all of Egypt, and the other inscriptions from the island attest to continuous cultic practice into the 5th c. According to Procopius, it was only in an event that can be dated on the basis of circumstantial evidence to 535–37 that the Emperor Justinian ordered one of his generals, Narses the Persarmenian, to ‘destroy’ the temples of Philae. It is also said explicitly in this account that the temples of Philae, and therewith its cults, remained open until this exceptionally late date.¹¹² Thus came to an end the cults of the last major functioning Egyptian temple, and scholars have generally accepted this end date of 535–37 for the cults at Philae.¹¹³

However, the literary account of Procopius has obscured the interpretation of the archaeological data for the fate of the temples at Philae. This holds in particular for the clearest attested case of a temple reuse on Philae and perhaps the most famous one of all Egypt, the transformation of the main Temple of Isis into a church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr. In the standard study on the topic, which starts from the assumption—on the basis of Procopius—that Justinian brought an end to a still thriving cult, the event is connected to five Greek inscriptions that can still be found in the *pronaos* of the Temple of Isis, and that provide rare cases in which inscriptions commemorate

¹¹¹ Procop. *Pers.* 1.19.34–35 on a treaty in which Diocletian allowed access to Philae in A.D. 298 for the southern peoples, which is confirmed in A.D. 452/53 as reported by Prisc. F 27 (ed. Blockley, pp. 322–24). On these passages, see Dijkstra (2008) esp. 136–48.

¹¹² Procop. *Pers.* 1.19.36.

¹¹³ See, most recently, Hahn (2008a).

the building of a church inside a temple.¹¹⁴ As they mention Bishop Theodore of Philae, who is attested in several other sources to have been in office from *ca.* 525 to at least 577,¹¹⁵ it is argued that Justinian gave orders to the local bishop to build the church in the temple with the help of Narses' soldiers. In this reconstruction the temple reuse becomes of the highest ideological importance, as it directly followed the abolition of the temple cults in 535–37.¹¹⁶ Consequently, the other cases of reuse on the island have all been dated to after *ca.* 535–37.¹¹⁷

Yet the account by Procopius on which this reconstruction is in large part based, is suspect on numerous counts.¹¹⁸ As we have seen above, Procopius' representation of the event as a temple 'destruction' already makes one suspicious of its reliability. Indeed, the literary motif of the emperor as a destroyer of temples is a familiar theme from Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* onwards.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the account should be seen in the context of several other passages in Procopius' works in which he portrays Justinian as a bringer of Christianity by ending 'pagan' cults, converting the population, transforming temples into churches and/or building churches. In his representation of the events Procopius seems to be influenced by the imperial propaganda machine.¹²⁰ At least one other case is known in which Procopius ascribes an ending of temple cults to Justinian but where in reality the temple closure was probably just for show.¹²¹ As for Philae, the account is certainly exaggerated, since the Isis Temple, as can still be witnessed today, was hardly 'destroyed' and is one of the best-preserved temples in Egypt. We can assume, then, that here too something less dramatic took place.¹²²

¹¹⁴ *I.Philae* 2.200–204. For two other dedicatory inscriptions of churches in temples at Kalabsha and Dendur further south, probably both of 6th c. date, see Dijkstra (2008) 300–302, 313–14, with references.

¹¹⁵ On Theodore of Philae, see Dijkstra (2008) esp. 299–335, and for a list of attestations p. 360 (appendix 4).

¹¹⁶ Nautin (1967). The direct sequence from temple (of Isis) to church (of St. Stephen) at Philae is still commonly accepted, see Emmel, Gotter and Hahn (2008) 12: "possibly Philae represents the only completely unambiguous case of an immediate take-over in cultic use from an active pagan temple to a regular church", and, in more detail, Hahn (2008a) 211–19.

¹¹⁷ E.g., Richter (2002) 124–36.

¹¹⁸ Dijkstra (2004) 151–54, (2008) *passim*.

¹¹⁹ For the (orthodox) emperor as a destroyer of temples in the *Life of Constantine* and the 4th and 5th c. Church historians, see Gotter (2008).

¹²⁰ For a detailed discussion of these passages see Dijkstra (2008) 272–76, 282.

¹²¹ Procop. *Aed.* 6.2.14–20: the Temple of Ammon at Augila in Lybia, see Dijkstra (2008) 282.

¹²² This is already recognised by Nautin (1967) 7, who nevertheless adds that with the 'destruction of the temples' Procopius means that the cults were ended; for the

Another problem with Procopius' account is that it implies that the cults continued undisturbed at Philae right until the incident of 535–37. It has long been known, however, that Christians lived side by side with the worshippers of the traditional cults on the island, since a bishopric was created there already in the 330s.¹²³ Equally, we know that a century later Philae had 'churches',¹²⁴ and even though the archaeological evidence for the two freestanding churches on the island (the East and West Church, see fig. 6, nos. Q and P) points to a later construction date, it can safely be assumed that the East Church at least (that is, the cathedral church) goes back to a 4th c. predecessor.¹²⁵ In this respect the situation at Philae was not exceptional within the region, as it follows similar trends of the expansion of Christianity at Syene and Elephantine. In this context of a region that gradually became Christian, likewise at Philae, it seems hard to maintain that the traditional cults on the same island continued completely unaffected into the 6th c.¹²⁶

This hypothesis is confirmed by a study of the thirty-five inscriptions in demotic and Greek that have come to us from the island and that date to the 4th and 5th c. As we have seen, it is significant to note what the last-dated inscription on a temple wall is, especially when we have a high concentration of inscriptions as at Philae. Since the last-dated inscription testifying to the traditional cults has a date of 456/57, it seems highly unlikely that the cults would have continued in full operation for eighty more years, as Procopius suggests, without leaving any trace. In addition, the study of the inscriptions already shows clear signs of contraction and isolation of the cults after 300. Thus, if

same line of thought, see Hahn (2008a) 204–205, who describes the event as “the destruction of the cults of Philae” (see e.g., his title and p. 206).

¹²³ The classic study is Wilcken (1901). For the creation of the bishopric of Philae in the A.D. 330s, see Dijkstra (2008) 55–56.

¹²⁴ *P.Leid. Z.* 10–11, on which see Dijkstra (2008) 53.

¹²⁵ The remains of the East Church have been dated to the 6th c. (Grossmann (1970) 40–41, followed by Richter (2002) 125, 127–28), or not before the turn of the 6th/7th c. (Grossmann (2002b) 464), on which see the summary in Dijkstra (2008) 318–19, who also advances the idea that the East Church is the most likely candidate for having been the episcopal church. The West Church has been dated to after the alleged reuse of the Temple of Isis as a church in A.D. 535–37, because blocks from the Temple of Harendotes (fig. 6, no. O) were reused in it (Richter (2002) 125–26, 135–36, followed by Grossmann (2002b) 465), but this *terminus post quem* is in need of revision and should be pushed back to the second half of the 5th c. (see Dijkstra (2008) 320–22 and below). In both cases, however, Richter (2002) 128 and 135 also allows for earlier predecessors that have not been attested archaeologically.

¹²⁶ Cf. Hahn (2008a) 219–24. For the expansion of Christianity at Syene and Elephantine, see Dijkstra (2008) 51–122 (Part I).

we look at the inscriptions rather than Procopius, an entirely different picture arises. Just like many other temples in Egypt the ones at Philae faced hard times in the 4th c., even though support from the southern peoples ensured their existence into the 5th c. The conclusion seems inescapable that the regular cults came to an end shortly after we hear last from the priests and cults, that is, soon after 456/57. In other words, it is highly probable that the event Procopius describes was in reality only a symbolic closure of a no longer functioning temple.¹²⁷

This alternative reconstruction of events has important consequences for our perception of the reuse of the Temple of Isis as a church. As we have seen, temples had usually been abandoned for a considerable time before they were turned into churches. If the cults at Philae had ceased not long after the middle of the 5th c., this opens up the plausible scenario that the temple had already stood idle for several decades by 535–37. As Bishop Theodore is mentioned in the inscriptions, he could indeed have turned the temple into a church shortly after its symbolic closure in 535–37. But the date of these inscriptions is not fixed, and since Theodore's long episcopate extended until at least 577, he could just as likely have done it forty years later. A further argument against its reuse in 535–37 is that Procopius does not mention any church building in his account, nor is there any hint of imperial involvement or that of the higher administration in the inscriptions, which would be expected if Justinian was in any way directly involved in the building project.¹²⁸ There is no reason, then, to assume that the temple reuse directly followed the temple closure. More likely, the decision to turn the temple into a church was made by the bishop as a consequence of local factors, in which a new purpose had to be found for an abandoned building and this building project could have taken place at any time between 535–37 and at least 577.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ For my study of these inscriptions, see Dijkstra (2008) 175–218 (chaps. 5 and 6). See already Dijkstra (2004) 152.

¹²⁸ Cf. e.g., Procop. *Aed.* 6.2.21–23, in which Justinian turned a Jewish 'temple' (i.e., a synagogue) into a church.

¹²⁹ As I have suggested (Dijkstra (2004) 154, (2008) 314–15), the decision might have been influenced by an incident described in a fascinating but problematic Greek petition on papyrus (*P.Cair.Masp.* 1.67004.9) dated to A.D. 567, in which the accused renews 'the temples' for a group of desert people, the Blemmyes. If, as I have argued, 'the temples' indeed refer to those at Philae, this cannot have meant a full-scale reinstatement of the cult of Isis, however; we should rather think in terms of the group of Blemmyes still being attracted to the site long after the cults had ceased to exist (cf. the situation at Deir el-Bahari). For the petition, see further Dijkstra (2004), and (2008) 1–11 (with an improved text in appendix 1).

Viewing the temple's reuse in practical rather than ideological terms also ties in better with the detailed architectural reconstruction of the church of St. Stephen in the temple made by Peter Grossmann in the 1980s.¹³⁰ For example, in the earlier reconstruction, which was mostly based on the position of the inscriptions and not on careful on-site observations, the vivid picture was painted that the Christians, perceiving that their religion had finally triumphed over 'paganism' on the island, removed the cult statue of Isis from the *naos* and erected a cross in its place. According to this picture, the *naos* was then used for the church of St. Stephen, even though it was later relocated to the *pronaos*, where today the main altar can still be found standing against the eastern wall.¹³¹ However, Grossmann's reconstruction has clearly shown that the builders of the church avoided the *naos* altogether, as in most other temples in Egypt, and that they built a modest church in the *pronaos* from the beginning. Use was made of the columns in the *pronaos* to form a three-aisled church that set out a new orientation, on a west-east axis (see fig. 7). Architectural features that were in the way were removed, niches were hacked out and curtains hung up, before some of the reliefs that were still visible were hacked away.¹³² This reconstruction makes it unlikely that, for instance, a cross was erected in the *naos* and that soldiers assisted in the building project. The changes to the *pronaos* betray an ordered building project that seems rather to have been carried out by local workmen.

Before we examine the archaeological traces of the other cases of temple reuse on the island, we cannot pass over another literary account describing the end of the cults at Philae, as found in the *Life of Aaron*. This Coptic hagiographical work, which probably dates to the 6th c., describes the lives of 4th and 5th c. monks in the First Cataract region, especially that of Aaron. Within it is a unique section about the early bishops of Philae. According to the story, the first bishop, Macedonius, who has just been ordained, visits the island incognito and pretends to make a sacrifice to the sacred falcon worshipped there. Instead, the bishop takes the falcon, cuts off its head, throws it into the fire and leaves. The bishop then has to flee from the island, as do the sons of the temple priest who were taking care of the sacrifices that day. Macedonius soon meets them in the desert,

¹³⁰ Grossmann (1984). See also Grossmann (1995) 194, and (2002b) 47.

¹³¹ Nautin (1967) esp. 7–8, 27–29.

¹³² Grossmann (1984) 109–15, (1995) 194, (2002b) 47.

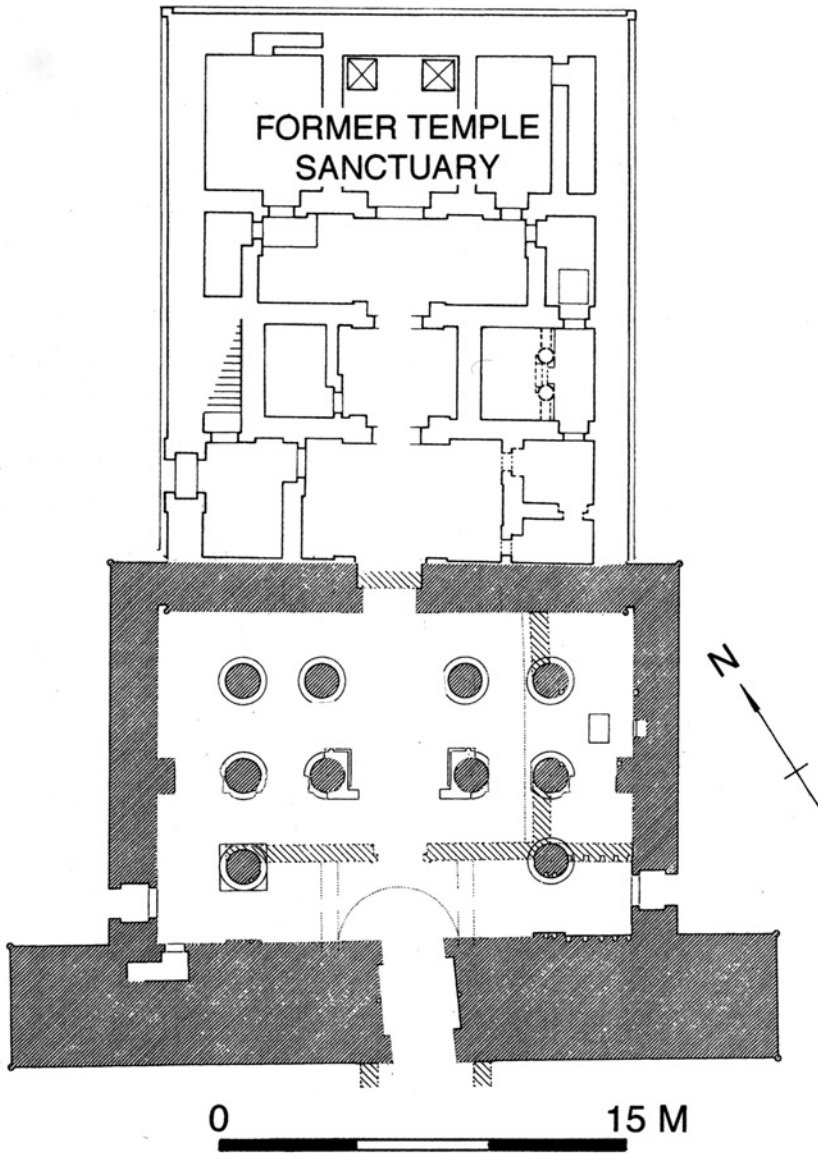


Fig. 7 The church of St. Stephen inside the Temple of Isis at Philae (McKenzie (2007) fig. 528).

they convert and one of them performs a miracle. As a result the whole island converts to Christianity, including the temple priest who builds a church on the island.¹³³ The story of the holy falcon conforms entirely to the pattern of the other (later) Coptic saints' lives with violent idol or temple destructions discussed above. In this case the story is certainly fictitious, for we know from the inscriptions that the cults of Philae continued into the 5th c. Even so, the account has historical significance as an explanation to a later, 6th c. audience as to how the island had become Christian.¹³⁴

Having placed the reuse of the Temple of Isis in a local context, let us finally have a look at the other cases of reuse on the temple island. If we maintain that the temple cults ceased shortly after 456/57, this means that the other cases of reuse do not necessarily fall after 535–37 but could have happened at any time after 456/57.¹³⁵ Taking away the focus from the reuse of the Temple of Isis also reveals that, as in the rest of the region, at Philae the main aim of reuse was for retrieving building material. Just as 'Temple X' from Elephantine, the Temple of Harendotes at Philae (fig. 6, no. O) was completely dismantled and its blocks reused in the foundations and lower parts of the nearby West Church. Blocks from at least the Temples of Augustus (no. L), Hathor (G) and Arensnuphis (B) were reused in houses on the island; conversely, houses were built in the Temples of Augustus, Imhotep (F) and, eventually, of Isis itself. Aside from the church of St. Stephen inside the Temple of Isis, two more churches at Philae were built in or close to temples, but they probably both date to later times. The church in front of the Augustus Temple has been dated to the 7th or 8th c., whereas the church in the Temple of Arensnuphis was built at an unknown date, but only after the temple had been in ruins for a considerable time.

In summary, the fate of the temples at Philae is different to elsewhere in the region, in that cults continued into the 5th c., whereas the evidence we have for Syene and Elephantine (Temples of Isis and Khnum) suggests that regular cults had come to an end there by the

¹³³ *Life of Aaron* (ed. Budge, pp. 445–56), with improved text of some of the key passages in Dijkstra (2008) 253–69 (chapt. 8).

¹³⁴ See Dijkstra (2007a), and (2008) 225–69 (chaps. 7 and 8). Cf. Hahn (2008a) 225–31.

¹³⁵ Even this may not be a fixed date. The 4th and 5th c. inscriptions from the island are concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the Isis Temple, which suggests that other temples on the temple terrain were no longer functioning (Dijkstra (2008) 183–85). If so, these buildings could already have been reused before A.D. 456/57.

4th c. Another major difference seems to be that the cases of temple reuse for building material in Syene and Elephantine were part of larger building projects, whereas Philae has more cases of the incidental removal of stones for housing. This may have something to do with the small size of the island (only 450 by 150 m), in which its inhabitants had to make the most of the available space. What the three towns have in common, however, is the abundant evidence they provide for temples reused for building material. In only two such cases (Temple of Harendotes at Philae and 'Temple X' at Syene) were blocks reused for a church building. The three certain cases we have for churches being built in or near temples in Late Antiquity in this region (Temples of Isis at Syene and Philae, Temple of Khnum at Elephantine), all in the 6th c., lead to the inescapable conclusion that the reuse of temples as churches was indeed exceptional. As at Syene and Elephantine, freestanding churches were no doubt built at Philae long before the Isis Temple was finally turned into a church. This gradually shifted the religious focus of the island from the southern to the northern side and embodied what was inevitable, that the landscape had finally become transformed into a Christian one, even at Philae.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has shown that the fate of the temples can best be studied from the archaeological evidence, because it provides the most detailed information about what happened to them, although other types of sources need to be taken into account as well. When studying temple reuse, moreover, the focus should be taken away from the standing remains of temples. The traces left of largely dismantled temples and/or reused blocks from temples (*spolia*) should also be examined closely in order to place what happened to still standing temples into a wider perspective. Such a wider perspective also has to incorporate what happened in the sacred landscape, particularly where freestanding churches were built that changed the religious focus to other places.

All this requires a thorough local or regional study, as I hope to have demonstrated, which must start from the assumption that temples were not widely destroyed and reused as churches but, if at all, variously reused, often for practical purposes; and that these cases of temple reuse do not necessarily all date to Late Antiquity. Although Christian (and other) literature may lead us to believe otherwise, it then becomes abundantly clear that temples reused as churches were

a minor factor in the highly complex process of the changing sacred landscape in Late Antiquity. Many more local and regional studies are needed to lay bare that process, the complexity of which we are only now beginning to understand.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CSCO = *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium* (Leuven 1903–)
GCS = *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig/Berlin 1897–)
PO = *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris 1903–)
SC = *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris 1941–)

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- P.Horak* = Harrauer H. and Pintaudi R. edd. *Gedenkschrift Ulrike Horak*, 2 vols. (Florence 2004).
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‘PAGAN’ STATUES

POLITICAL TALISMANS? RESIDUAL 'PAGAN' STATUES IN LATE ANTIQUE PUBLIC SPACE

Luke Lavan

Abstract

This article explores the fate of certain statues of pagan gods and heroes that were displayed not in temples but in streets, squares and public buildings. These images had a functional connection to the civic activities that took place there, especially political activities. An attempt is made to detect to what extent such functional connections were retained or disrupted in Late Antiquity. The fate of images of Victory, Tyche, Minerva, civic heroes and emperors, both living and dead, is examined and compared. Christian attempts to reform their uses can be detected, but these seem to have had limited impact until the mid-6th c. Tentative conclusions are drawn about the significance of the selective preservation of some statues, which may have survived as political talismans in uncertain times.

DISPLAY AND STATUE FUNCTION

The display of pagan statues in urban space underwent a number of transformations from the mid-4th c. onwards. Not only were statues removed from temples, but many were re-installed in baths and private houses, or on public streets and squares. In moving to their new settings, these images were joining a number of already established 'pagan' statues, of gods or heroes, which had been displayed away from major temples, in public space, for hundreds of years. These images could be found in eastern cities, as described by Pausanias on his journeys around Greece, but also in the West.¹ In A.D. 390, the pagan Maximus of Madauros boasted to Augustine that the market-place of his African city was 'occupied by a crowd of beneficent deities', whilst in 384 Ambrose noted that at Rome, 'the baths, colonnades and streets'

¹ Statues of Greece: Religious statues of *agorai* in Greece: Paus. 1.35.3 (Ajax), 2.13.6 (golden she-goat), 7.22.2 (market Hermes). Ajax was within a temple, though perhaps a small *heroon*.

were 'all crammed with images', to whom Symmachus and his friends might sacrifice.² Such statues often had intimate associations with the 'secular' civic space within which where they were set. Thus Hermes stood in the market place, as the god of merchants; both Hermes and Artemis watched over crossroads, as gods of the traveller; Victory occupied the stadium or theatre, granting success in competition; the statues of the twelve Consenting Gods (restored with their portico in A.D. 367) stood in the Forum Romanum, protecting political business.³ These statues were occasionally provided with a modest architectural setting, such as the canopy used to cover statues of city tyches, set within the agorai of eastern cities, which gave them the status of temples. However, others were the subject of devotional activities, which did not seem to depend upon them being publicly recognised cult images, although others could have a purely decorative function.⁴

Surprisingly, these statues were retained in streets, squares and public buildings in the later 4th c., especially where they related to political activities. Furthermore, some of the traditional associations and even devotional rituals survived, and were accepted by many Christians, if not by all of the clergy, as part of late antique public life. This article seeks to describe the extent of continuity in these ritual practices, and to account for this. Attempts at reform are considered, although the (ephemeral) evidence for change is not privileged *a priori* over the more frequent evidence for continuity. This study will focus especially on statues associated with rituals which reinforced the political authorities of the day.⁵ The literary evidence for this topic comes mainly from larger cities, especially

² Pagan statues in market places: August. *Ep.* 16 and 17; Amb. *Ep.* 18.31 (73.31).

³ Hermes in the market place: Paus. 7.22.2 (market Hermes at Pharai), at Sicyon (2.9.8), at Sparta (3.11.11), at Athens (1.15.1). This attribute was not confined to Hermes: Olympia, altars of Market Artemis and Market Zeus 5.15.4. Sparta, statues of Market Zeus and Market Athena: 3.11.9. Hermes and Artemis at crossroads, as gods of the traveller: Eitrem (1913) 738–91. Victory statues in theatre: Dio Cass. 50.8.3 (Theatre of Pompey, Rome). Athens, theatre of Dionysius: *IG* 2(2) 3089. Aphrodisias theatre: Smith and Erim (1991) 74–79, no. 7–11. See also Sear (2006) 156 (Falerio Picenus) and 284 (Sabratha). Isthmia stadium and theatre: Sturgeon (1987) 122. Consenting Gods: *CIL* 6.102 (A.D. 367).

⁴ Pharai (in Achaia), statue of Hermes in agora: Paus. 7.22.2: 'In front of the statue is a stone heartstone, with bronze lamps stuck onto it with lead' where people burned incense before consulting the oracle. Incense offered to Aphrodite statue in agora at Gaza: *V. Porph.* 59–62. Canopies: see Tychaia below. See Caseau's article on statues in this volume, p. 485, for a Jewish attempt to make a distinction between public statues of gods, that was not obvious to this community.

⁵ The term 'pagan statue' is used here to mean any image of a god or hero relating to Hellenic religion and mythology, regardless of the original status of the object.

Constantinople, supplemented by epigraphic and architectural evidence from cities in Africa and Asia Minor, where the preservation of statue bases *in situ* is exceptionally good. This is complemented by occasional examples from Italy, Spain and the Near East. However, overall the evidence remains uneven, as it is for most urban themes in this period. We are not equally well-informed about every part of the topic. The result is that the connections and conclusions offered here are tentative in character, and cannot be regarded as definitive. It is important to note that it is the everyday uses of statues and their urban setting which are my main focus, rather than doctrinal issues such as whether many people still regarded them as being gods. I am more concerned with continuity of ritual use and residual feeling than continuity of active belief comparable to assent to the doctrines of Christianity.

There were, of course, many other reasons behind the continuing display of 'pagan' statues in streets and squares, aside from any ritual or functional connections to urban space. Although not the focus of this article, they need to be considered as the background against which any 'functional' reasons for erecting or honoring statues survived. Perhaps the most important single motive for re-displaying a religious image was aesthetic conservatism. Aesthetic appreciation of former cult statues is clear from legislation of late antique emperors and other sources.⁶ It has also been suggested that ancient statues were re-displayed for the sake of antiquarianism: by the 6th c. even broken antique statues were occasionally set up, in order to provide an evocation of the classical past that had little to do with their original use.⁷

Other surviving statues might be considered simply as appropriate decoration to specific 'secular' activities, like the herms in the hippodrome of Constantinople, visible on the Obelisk of Theodosius I, which, at the Circus of Maxentius in Rome, were turned into portraits of famous people.⁸ 'Associative decoration' might explain the statue of Aphrodite located outside a brothel in the eastern capital.⁹ Such reasoning might also help explain the popularity of Bacchants of Dionysus, reflected in statue epigrams visible in Constantinople, penned

⁶ Aesthetic appreciation of statues in legislation as works of art: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15 (A.D. 399), carried into *Cod. Iust.* 1.11.3. For an early 5th c. view recommending the de-sacralisation of cult statues into works of art, see Prudent. *Perist.* 2.481–84. See also epigraphic evidence assembled in Lepelley (1994).

⁷ On antiquarianism and statue collecting: Bassett (2004) 101, 115–16 and Machado (2009). Broken statues displayed: Myrup (forthcoming).

⁸ Herm of Demosthenes at Circus of Maxentius: Humphrey (1986) 594.

⁹ Aphrodite statue outside brothel at Cpl: *Patria* 2.65.

by authors of the later 6th c.¹⁰ These statues might have been retained as symbols of conviviality in places associated with festivals or drinking, reflecting the enduring appeal of Dionysiac festive culture in Late Antiquity. They might thus appear just as Dionysus and his companions traditionally formed part of the decoration appropriate to dinner parties in houses of the wealthy.¹¹

Alternatively, other statues of pagan divinities and heroes could be spared destruction on account of their positive moral associations to classically educated Christians, who assigned new meanings to existing images. Thus we hear Ennodius of Pavia bemoaning the profanation of a statue of Minerva in the early 6th c.—she had been taken into a brothel as part of her humiliation—though this was a noble virgin, whom Ennodius praised.¹² Similar attitudes might have assisted the display of statues of Artemis, another principled female. According to the *Parastaseis*, she was represented by two statues in the fora of Constantine and Arcadius at Constantinople, in contrast to Zeus, who had only one statue in the squares of the city.¹³ Malalas notes statues of Hercules still standing in his day, which he thought were honorific statues set up by Hercules' descendants. The mythological value of Hercules as a positive exemplar should not be underestimated. Elite interest in Hercules, as a semi-divine hero, seen in the mosaics of private houses, might have aided the preservation of his statues in public space, in addition to imperial connotations, which will be explored later.¹⁴

Antiquarian aesthetics also played a role. Eusebius characteristically asserts that pagan statues were re-displayed at Constantinople by Constantine with the intention of provoking ridicule.¹⁵ However, most scholars see here an exaggeration: whilst some cult objects were ritually humiliated in the 4th c., it is clear that Constantine, and most other urban authorities, at Rome and in the provinces, undertook a programme of systematic urban ornament using these images, in which

¹⁰ Bacchants: *Anth. Graec.* 16.57, 58, 59, 60: 57 is Paul the Silentiary and 59 is Agathias Scholasticus.

¹¹ Dionysiac festival culture in Late Antiquity: Soler (2006) 77–89 and see bibliographic essay in this volume. Dionysiac decoration of houses: Swift (2009) 71–72.

¹² Minerva: Ennod. *Carm.* no. 278.

¹³ Artemis in agorai of Cpl: *Parastaseis* 8 and 20 (Artemis), 11 (Zeus).

¹⁴ Hercules: Malalas 6.16. For Hercules in late antique domestic mosaics and heroic imagery of the elite in general see Ellis (1991) 126–30.

¹⁵ Display of 'pagan' statues by Constantine: Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 3.54–55.

there is no evidence for such intent.¹⁶ Indeed, the original conception of Constantinople seems to have been little shaped by Christianity: the inauguration rites of the city were entirely traditional and it was built with structures which were designed (or could be interpreted) as temples, including a capitol; the monumental centre did not take on a strongly Christian character until the building of the first Hagia Sophia in 360. Mythological statues were not out of place here.¹⁷

In contrast, continued devotion to pagan statues is unlikely to have been a reason for erecting them in streets beyond the later 4th c. There is a small amount of evidence for surviving religious devotion to statues in public space in the 4th to early 5th c. According to the problematic *Life of Porphyry*, a marble image of Aphrodite adorning the agora of Gaza was venerated by women as a symbol of fertility, until the bishop organised its destruction in the last years of the 4th c.¹⁸ Maximus of Madauros's image of the forum of his city in 390 suggests that such statues were once not uncommon—he alludes to at least two statues of Mars, and possibly others. Today, such statues (or their bases) are rarely found on fora/agorai, suggesting that many cities did see a period of statue iconoclasm at some time within Late Antiquity, whereby prominent 'pagan' statues that received devotions were removed. Despite this, private acts might continue: a law of A.D. 415 reports devotions to re-located statues in public baths. Christian stories about the dangers of looking at secularised pagan statues may reflect the unease of those who occasionally witnessed the muttered prayer or reverential gesture of a pagan.¹⁹

Finally, conservatism and inertia can be suggested as possible reasons for survival of 'pagan' statues in public space. Statues of Hermes are a notable survival, especially those which stood at crossroads. The Greek Anthology here provides some impressions. Its disproportionately numerous mentions of Hermes, the god of travellers, may result

¹⁶ Discussed by Mango (1963) 56–57. On Eusebius see also Caseau (2007) 117. On the public exposure of ritual objects from a mithraeum at Alexandria under Bishop George, for humiliation see Socrates *Hist. Eccl.* 3.2. A similar act at Cple under Justinian: Malalas 18.136.

¹⁷ Foundation of Cple: Frolov (1944) 61ff, Dagron (1974) 37–42. Temples and churches: see discussion in Mango (1990) 34–37, and esp. Zos. 2.30–31, *Not. Const.* Regio 8. St Sophia: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 2.16.16.

¹⁸ Aphrodite at Gaza: *V. Porph.* 59–62.

¹⁹ Dangers of looking at statues: James (1996). Statues attracting veneration in baths as described in *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.20 (A.D. 415), discussed by Caseau in this volume.

from the copying of inscriptions still visible in Late Antiquity at cross-roads in town or country—indeed some epigrams explicitly confirm such locations for these statues, though Palladas, writing in the late 4th c., records a crossroad Hermes being overthrown.²⁰ Of Hermes statues in market places, statues survived in the *macellum* by the forum at Bulla Regia and a forum temple at Dougga (as part of a collection), although the Hermes temple on the agora of Antioch was demolished either under Constantine or at the end of the 4th c.²¹ Quite how this varied pattern of survival should be interpreted is open to question. It is here perhaps important to remember that there must have been very many statues of Hermes, some of which might have escaped destruction. Although modern text books are full of iconoclastic monks, there were parts of the late antique Mediterranean where paganism was active into the 6th c.²² Furthermore, even in some Christianised cities, comprehensive change might never come: like at Sagalassos, where despite crosses scratched everywhere, no attempt was made to remove portrait busts of the old gods from decorating the walls of the lower agora.²³ Perhaps people just forgot who some statues depicted, and there never was a successful radical bishop. This might explain a low level of survival in small towns and roadsides.

Significantly, none of these motivations seem to fully account for the erection and continued display of the statues considered in this article, which seem to have been retained and honoured for traditional reasons, out of step with the trends of the period. What is especially surprising is their public prominence, which demands a positive explanation which negates the possibility of accidental survival.

²⁰ Hermes: e.g. *Anth Graec.* 16.254 on roadside Hermes. Artemis: e.g. 16.158. See especially book 6 for an Artemis at a crossroads (6.266), and a vow for wayside Hermes (6.299). Crossroad Hermes overthrown: 9.441 (Palladas). For another statue of Hermes addressing a traveller see 16.124 and perhaps 16.123.

²¹ Statues of Hermes: Bulla Regia: Beschtaouch, Hanoune and Thébert (1977) 89; Dougga: Golfetto (1961) 36. Antioch, Shrine of Hermes in *agora* demolished and replaced by *basilica* of an otherwise unknown praetorian prefect Rufinus under Constantine: Malalas 13.3, Downey (1961) 622–31. More credibly, Zos. 5.2 has a well-known praetorian prefect called Rufinus building a *basilica stoa* in Antioch, in or soon after A.D. 393.

²² Paganism surviving in 6th c., e.g. Sicily, Sardinia and Western Asia Minor: see Jones (1964) 938–40.

²³ Agorai of Sagalassos: Lavan (forthcoming b).

VICTORY

The first 'pagan' statue type for which a spatial function seems to actively survive beyond the mid-4th c. is that of Victory. It is tempting to see this cult as just the personification of a quality, but the rituals surrounding victory statues in the 4th c. suggest no distinction in status with that offered to other gods. Statues and other images of Victory were frequently used in public space especially in settings of political activity. The best-recorded is that from the Senate in Rome—illuminated by the well-known polemics provoked by the removal of the altar and statue of Victory in A.D. 382.²⁴ This statue was not simply a statue in the Senate, as was the statue of *demos* in the bouleuterion of Athens; it was the statue of the Senate, to which senators sacrificed before each session so that each would be held under oath.²⁵ Such sacrifices were seen by the pagan aristocracy as essential to ensuring the military success of the State, although they were as much part of the law court up to the time of Constantine as they were of the Senate.²⁶ That such 'procedural sacrifices' were controversial amongst some Christians can be seen in the reaction of an employee of the imperial mint at Alexandria, who overturned an altar set up there by Julian.²⁷ It would seem from this evidence that the cult of Victory in public ceremony had little chance of surviving the Christianisation of the Roman state. However, it seems that the simple presence of statues of Victory inside secular public buildings was far less controversial.

It appears from a panegyric of Claudian that the Senate's statue of Victory was again present in the curia at the time of Honorius' visit to Rome in A.D. 403–404. Only the altar had been removed,

²⁴ Altar and statue of the victory: see Gwynn in this volume for further references. The pertinent texts are Amb. *Ep.* 17 (or 72) and 18 (or 73) and 17a (or 72a) (the *memorandum* of Symmachus), most recently translated and commented by Liebeschuetz (2005). An older but still useful article is Pohlsander (1969). See also Paul. *V. Amb.* 8.26.

²⁵ Statue of *demos* in the bouleuterion of Athens: Paus. 1.3.5. Senators sacrificing at victory statue: Amb. *Ep.* 17.8–9 (nature of oaths), 18.1. Herodian 5.5.7 describes the sacrifices on the altar by the statue of victory, made by senators arriving at the Senate.

²⁶ Sacrifices as essential to military success: Zos. 5.41.2–3, Amb. *Ep.* 17a.9. Victory cult connected to military victory: Amb. *Ep.* 17a.4 and elsewhere.

²⁷ Altar in mint at Alexandria: Amm. Marc. 22.11.9.

whilst the statue had been re-established.²⁸ This might seem a detail, a insignificant coda to a great struggle. Yet there were many other victories erected in this period. C. Roueché has pointed out that a large collection of victory statues were set up around a statue of Empress Aelia Flaccila, on the Embolos of Ephesus in the 380s. She further notes a statue of Victory dedicated by *primipilarii* at Novae in Bulgaria in the second half of the 4th c. However, she misses a dedication of a victory from Cuicul in Numidia, made by a governor inside a civil basilica, which had been established within a disaffected temple in A.D. 364–67.²⁹ Furthermore, at Thamugadi, a statue of Victory was dedicated to an unnamed Count of Africa (so Constantinian or later) and explicitly connects the award to the general's military successes.³⁰ These last two dedications appear extremely conservative: there is nothing to suggest that the role of the statue in public space was altered here to suit a new purpose. Admittedly, victories were rarely dedicated as free-standing statues in the 5th c.: the last being dedicated in the *vicus Patricius* at Rome during the 2nd half of the 5th c.³¹ Yet they were not taken down in the later 5th and 6th c., and nothing Christian was offered to replace them in civic public space. Notably, there is no record of any attempt to bring Christian symbols into the Senate, at Rome or Constantinople in the 5th or 6th c. which might have replaced such statues, although military shields and standards were Christianised during the 4th c., and the Holy Gospels were present in law courts for oaths by the 6th c.³²

²⁸ Statue in curia at Rome A.D. 403–404: Claud. *de VI cons. Honorii* 597–602. Earlier mentions: Dio Cass. 51.22.1, Herodian 5.5–7.

²⁹ Victory statues at Ephesus: Roueché (2002). *Primipilarii* at Novae: Bresson, Drew-Bear and Zuckermann (1995). Cuicul Victory: *AE* (1946) 108 = *CRAI* (1943) 376–86, with *AE* (1946) 107 = *CRAI* (1943) 381–83 and *Lep.* vol.2 404, 406.

³⁰ Thamugadi, Victory dedicated for Count of Africa: *AE* (1902) 91 = *BCTH* (1902) 314–15, *Lep.* vol.2 451. Second victory statue: *BCTH* (1896) 284, dedicated as part of statue group also including Jupiter and Hercules (and thus thought to be tetrarchic), in hemicycle of Market of Sertius where later monument to concord of Valens and Valentinian I erected, discussed in *Lep.* vol.2 449.

³¹ Rome, *vicus Patricius* victory dedication, in 2nd half of the 5th c: *CIL* 6.1775 = 41422 (thanks to C. Machado).

³² Holy Gospels in law courts: Cassiod. *Variae* 4.12, *Cod. Iust.* 3.1.14 (A.D. 530), Justinian *Nov.* 62 (A.D. 537) (senatorial court); 90.9 (A.D. 539) (cases with presence of Gospels and oaths of participants); 112.2 (A.D. 541) (oaths for plaintiffs); 124.1 (A.D. 545) (oaths for parties ag. bribery). In other govt oaths: Justinian *Nov.* 35 (535), 128.23 (A.D. 545), Malalas 18.71.

In the wider presentation of imperial power, on palaces and arches, continuity in the use of victories is even greater, though here they are decorative rather than free-standing statues where sacrifices might have once took place. Victories appear on imperial monuments, such as the columns of Arcadius and of Marcian, to the mid-6th c, as well as on consular diptychs in East and West. The facade of Theodoric's palace at Ravenna similarly appears decorated with victories, as shown in the depiction from St Apollinare Nuovo, whilst the royal helmet of Lombard king Agilulf (A.D. 591–615) shows two such figures saluting their lord. Ultimately, victories did lose their place on public monuments and court art. From the reign of Justinian, they were displaced by masculine angels, but we have no evidence that anyone ever tried to remove them from public buildings—so that many survived until the modern period.³³ Whilst this symbol of military potency could be quietly dropped in mid-6th c. Constantinople, such a move might have been too much to accept for struggling armies in the later 4th and 5th c. Military victory might now sometimes be presented in Christian terms: starting with the column of Arcadius, where victories carry a wreathed cross.³⁴ But Victory herself apparently could not be discarded in the early 5th c.: victories were still present on this monument and others, as they were on coins. There is no indication before the time of Justinian of any change in the general function of these images, only that they continued to exist within an increasingly Christianised city, as if their traditional nature could just be tolerated or ignored.

Symmachus had argued for the preservation of the Senate's statue of Victory, as the tutelary god of the Roman state, to whom sacrifice should be made. It is unsurprising that this argument did not succeed with a Christian emperor. Those who later restored the statue and erected others may have relied on more subtle arguments, less directly opposed to Christian ambitions. The comments of Zosimus on the melting of statues perhaps illustrate wider conservative attitudes in this period. He notes that the melting of a statue of *Virtus* at Rome, to pay

³³ Victories to angels: Wright (1986); Ceci (2001–2003) 303, which I discovered late in the writing of this article.

³⁴ Shields and standards: e.g. illustrations of *Notitia Dignitatum* or *Missorium* of Constantius II, plus Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.4 for crosses leading Theodosius I's army. Grabar (1936) esp. 32, 34–39. On coins, victories start to carry crosses (Mattingly-Sydenham, *RIC=RIC* 10.219, 10.225) and globes surmounted by crosses (*RIC* 10.213, 10.273) from the reign of Arcadius' successor Theodosius II. They last appear under Heraclius: Ceci (2001–2003) 303.

Alaric, resulted in the loss of the *Virtus* of Rome as a state.³⁵ Here, as elsewhere, Zosimus illustrates his view that statues perform an apotropaic function, against enemies of Rome, whether buried or exposed to public view. This attitude, recently discussed by Karivieri,³⁶ was reflected in an epigram recorded on a stele of Ares partly buried in Thrace: ‘as long as this fierce Ares rests on the ground, the peoples of the Goths shall never set foot in Thrace’ (*Anth. Graec.* 9.805). Similarly, Olympiodorus mentions a statue which protected Sicily from both the fires of Etna and Alaric’s invasion: its removal by an imperial official led to disasters of both kinds.³⁷ Such concerns were not confined to pagan authors. A similar appreciation of the value of statues as talismans is present in Malalas, and is present in stories of Constantine burying the Palladion and other statues of Athena at Constantinople. Furthermore, the idea that to damage a statue invited disaster had a long life into Christian medieval Byzantium.³⁸ It seems likely that such feelings might have been present even amongst Christian senators in the late 4th and early 5th c., who might have been nervous at removing such a powerful talisman. Only a single recorded slight on victories is known from this time: from Palladas of Alexandria, a pagan writing around the end of the 4th c., who records a victory statue being given away to a sailor. However, he also manages a cheerful epigram on images of Victory at this time, suggesting that all was not lost for those who sought to retain these statues.³⁹

Another context for the survival of statues of Victory was the games, where the goddess could be connected not only to sporting victory but also to imperial honours celebrated in amphitheatre games and the hippodromes of imperial capitals. Victories were provided at Rome for the Circus of Maxentius and preserved at the Circus Maximus in the 4th c. Like many entertainment buildings, the amphitheatre of Carthage still had at least one statue of Victory. This may have figured amongst one of the statues restored in A.D. 373–74 by the proconsul (and orator on victories) Symmachus.⁴⁰ Statues of

³⁵ *Virtus* at Rome: Zos. 5.41.7.

³⁶ Karivieri (2010) 403–404.

³⁷ Statue protecting Sicily: Olympiodorus *Frag.* 16.

³⁸ Statues as talismans in Malalas see: Moffat (1990) 107–108. Damaging a statue invites disaster in medieval Byzantium: *Parastaseis* 14, 26, discussed in James (1996) 12 and by Mango (1963) 59–63. Constantine: n. 74 and Procop. *Goth.* 1.15.11–16.

³⁹ Palladas on Victory: *Anth. Graec.* 9.386, 16.282.

⁴⁰ Rome: Victory statue atop column on euripus of Circus Maximus still on 4th c. mosaic depictions: see Humphrey (1986) 269. Circus of Maxentius had statue of

Victory were also dedicated in the hippodrome at Constantinople by a city prefect under Arcadius.⁴¹ The dedication pointed out that it was the Hand of God which gave victories to the emperor, a device that also appears (ephemerally) on Arcadius' coins, crowning him with laurels, an action which Victory normally performed herself.⁴² Furthermore, representations of Victory are entirely absent from the near contemporary Obelisk of Theodosius I, suggesting that a reform of imperial iconography was underway.⁴³ However, later epigrams from the hippodrome suggest that any such reform did not endure. In the mid-6th c., winged victories festoon the monument to Porphyrius the Charioteer, praising his victories under Justinian.⁴⁴ The language of the epigrams on these monuments is remarkable. It is 'Queen Victory' who determines fortune in the hippodrome (*Anth. Graec* 15.46). Further, 'Divine Victory' crowns Porphyrius for winning in the race course, and for the Green faction's support of the emperor in the Nika rebellion (15.47, 16.350).⁴⁵ Whilst the pagan Eunapius strongly criticised the Arcadian dedication with its 'Hand of God', he would have found little to complain about in the later monuments.⁴⁶

That such concepts might survive in the hippodrome—the arena for celebrating imperial as well as sporting victories—is perhaps surprising. The lack of Christian penetration into this political arena, even in the mid-6th c., is remarkable. Only some of the acclamations of the circus crowds of Constantinople (recorded in the time of Justinian) seem to reflect Christianisation.⁴⁷ These can be balanced by cries to

Victory fragment: op. cit. 285. Carthage: victory statue found in amphitheatre and restored statues: *CIL* 8.24584, Delattre (1899) 2, p. 17, n. 2. Lep. vol. 2 15–16.

⁴¹ Hippodrome of Constantinople, victory statue: Eunapius *Frag.* 68 (*Exc. de Sent.* 72); *Anth. Graec.* 16.345 records a victory in the same place, though with a different dedication; Nicetas Choniates 645 describes such a statue here physically. See Bassett (2004) 231.

⁴² Hand of God on Arcadian coins: *RIC* 9.53b, 9.22, 9.41, 10.1310 (Honorius but minted in Cple). They do not occur on coins of Theodosius II and Valentinian III, where victories bearing wreaths can be found (*RIC* 10.213cf, 10.351, 10.432v), although others start to carry crosses: see n. 32, or wreaths and globes with crosses (*RIC* 10.213, 10.273).

⁴³ Obelisk of Theodosius I: Geyssen (1998).

⁴⁴ Porphyrius monument: see Cameron (1973). Also, a victory still crowns Anastasius on the Barberini Diptych, rather than the Hand of God: Grabar (1936) 49.

⁴⁵ 'Laurelled victory' also appears in the epigram of a statue of Justinian in the same place, though not here as a directing agent of events: *Anth. Graec.* 16.62.

⁴⁶ See above n. 39.

⁴⁷ Acclamations at Constantinople: see Maas (1912), esp. 30–34; see also Cameron (1976) appendix C, 318–33.

Fortune to give victory in the Hippodrome at Antioch in the early 6th c., and the testimony of circus programmes from 6th c. Oxyrhynchus, which describe statues of Victory being carried at the head of the circus parade.⁴⁸ The Church seems to have kept well away from entertainment buildings. Very occasionally, martyria and other churches were constructed within them, but only when their traditional use had ended.⁴⁹ Even at the end of the 6th c., when Bishop Gregory of Antioch obtained imperial funds to rebuild his city's hippodrome, his enemies described it as the 'Church of Satan'.⁵⁰ It is striking that neither the senate house nor the circus seems to have been effectively Christianised, leaving space for images and ideologies of the past to linger longer than one might expect.

TYCHE OF THE CITY

For most ordinary cities, the most important divinity for a city's well-being was not Victory but the Tyche of the City. This was the community's very own goddess of fortune, and deified embodiment, who was often honoured with a shrine in the centre of a city (a *tychaion*), where its principal statue resided: in several cases this is known to have been simply a small four-columned canopy for the statue, preceded by an altar.⁵¹ The location of the *tychaion*, often on the main agora of the city (as at Constantinople, Alexandria, Sagalassos and Apamea), connected it to civic political rituals at the heart of civic life. These likely included sacrifices to Tyche and festival honours, though we have no direct evidence. During the 4th-6th c., the Tyches of major cities such as Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus and Trier were represented in art, as was even the tiny city of Madaba.⁵² Yet, archaeological and histori-

⁴⁸ Antioch, Acclamations to Fortune: Sev. Ant. *Hom.* 26 (*PO* 36/4 547). Procession for circus at Oxyrhynchus, noticed by Roueché (2002) 545: *P.Oxy.* 2707, *P. Bingen* 128 published by Menci (2000) 523–27, no. 128.

⁴⁹ Churches built inside entertainment buildings: Saradi (2006) 300–301. I do not consider Christian invocation graffiti to be evidence of Christianisation of these structures, as they occur widely elsewhere within urban space.

⁵⁰ Antioch hippodrome: Joh. Eph. *Hist. eccl.* 3.34.

⁵¹ Tychaia as four columned canopies: Antioch in Syria: Malalas 8.14; Caesarea Palestinae: Price and Trell (1977) fig. 367; Sagalassos, identified on civic coins from time of Claudius II Gothicus: Talloen (2003) vol. 1 69–70, vol. 2 103, catalogue vol. 2 no. 573, fig. 220; Talloen and Waelkens (2004) 171–216.

⁵² Tychaia in art: see Saradi (2006) 135–44; Bühl (1995); Shelton (1979).

cal evidence suggests that their statue cult in city centres was severely curtailed in the late 4th and early 5th c. The *tychaia* at Caesarea in Cappadocia and Gaza were destroyed, the former around the time of Julian, the latter in 402 (if the *Life of Porphyry* can be trusted), whilst the destruction at Apamea is undated. That at Alexandria was adapted into a wine shop in the late 4th c. (though much of its famous statuary was left in place); that at Sagalassos was transformed into an imperial honorific monument in the first years of the 5th c. (with the altar apparently removed); that at Antioch was converted into a martyrion (for S. Ignatius) under Theodosius II, whereas that at Perge seems to have been given up to industrial uses, at an unknown time.⁵³

The contrast with Constantinople could not be more marked. Here a *tychaion* was established by Constantine in the eastern capital, on the edge of the 'Basilica' courtyard, by its entrance from the Augusteion. According to Zosimus, this was not a temple to Tyche/Fortuna in general but for the Tyche of Rome, which (from Socrates) seems to have become the Tyche of Constantinople.⁵⁴ Its central setting, on the boundary between the two main squares of the city, suggests that it was intended as the *tychaion* of the new city. Indeed, Dagron has hypothesised from a passage of Ps-Hesychius that the adjacent Temple of Rhea might actually be that of the old Tyche of Byzantium.⁵⁵ Mango notes a second statue of the Tyche of the City was erected on a large monolithic honorific column, probably also by Constantine, or someone else who had triumphed over the Goths, according to its inscription. John Lydus, writing in the mid-6th c. records that it bore a statue of Tyche in his day, and it was known as the Tyche of the City until the 10th c.⁵⁶ Furthermore, no attempt was made in Late Antiquity to remove the *tychaion* in the city centre, or its statue, despite the sacrifices that Julian had made to it here: it still existed

⁵³ See appendix on fate of Tychaia.

⁵⁴ Tychaion of Cpl: Zos. 2.31.3, Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.11, Hsych 15. Discussed in Bauer (1996) 219. The identification of the *tetrastoon* of Zosimus with the 'Basilica' courtyard rather than the Augusteion is confirmed by the passage of Socrates. It was restored at an unknown time in late antiquity, with new columns being given by the prefect Theodorus: *Anth. Graec.* 9.697.

⁵⁵ Dagron (1974) 373–74 argues that the two exedras honouring 'Pallas' (rendered by Dagron as Tyche) constructed by Constantine (in Hsych 41–42) are the same as the two temples of Zosimus, and that the Rhea of Zosimus is the civic Rhea or Tyche of Byzantium.

⁵⁶ Tyche on column: discussed by Mango (1993b) 2–3. Lydus *de mens.* 4.132. Tyche of the city in the 10th c.: *Life of St Luke the Stylite* 49 (*PO* 11.2, 246).

in the mid-6th c., when Procopius mentions it, though it may have been removed shortly after: according to the *Patria*, Maurice (A.D. 584–602) destroyed the ‘Tyche of Constantinople brought from Rome by Constantine’.⁵⁷

It has been noted that tyches often appeared in late antique court art, on monuments and objects associated with imperial power (honorific monuments, chairs of office etc). Much of this may be no more than appropriate decoration. Yet the use of images of Rome and Constantinople within public ceremony had the potential to recall older rituals. A helmeted goddess—likely Roma—appears on the heads on wands of state held by consuls, by Constantius II on the Calendar of A.D. 354, and by the western consul Rufus Gennadius Probus Orestes on his diptych of A.D. 530. This suggests that the rod was a significant heirloom of the western consulship, which needed to be seen in public.⁵⁸ The most spectacular use of the Tyche of Constantinople was in an imperial ceremony apparently inaugurated by Constantine, to celebrate the anniversary of the city, mentioned by Malalas, the *Parastaseis* and the *Patria*. Malalas records that a golden wooden statue of Constantine, carrying the Tyche of the City of Constantinople, was processed in a chariot into the hippodrome on the anniversary of the city to receive the obeisance of the reigning emperor ‘as he gazed at this statue of Constantine and the Tyche of the City’—replicating perhaps a cult of Rome and Augustus—but for the new city and its founder. According to Malalas, this custom still existed in his time.⁵⁹ Quite what this meant to those watching by the 6th c. is not clear, but the fact that it survived at all is surprising.

Thus there seems to have been a great difference between the way the Tyche of Rome or Constantinople was treated (especially in the Eastern capital) in comparison to those of provincial cities, including leading centres such as Antioch. A single inscription from Africa suggests that special treatment for the city goddess of the western capital was encouraged in the provinces, although with a subtle change. An inscription from Abthugni in Africa, records the erection by a

⁵⁷ Julian sacrifices at tychaion: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.8. Julian sacrifices at statue of Tyche: Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.2. Statue in 6th c.: Procop. *Goth.* 1.15.9–14. Maurice destroying Tyche of city: *Patria* 2.131.

⁵⁸ Delbrück (1929).

⁵⁹ Tyche and city anniversary: Malalas 13.8. *Parastaseis* 5 claims that this rite stopped under Theodosius I. *Patria* 2.42.

municipal curator in A.D. 375–78 of a statue of *Urbs aeterna Roma*: C. Lepelley suggests this had been proposed as a secular alternative to the *Dea Roma*.⁶⁰ If so, we have a clear example of the retention of a personification, and the removal of its pagan cult status. However, there is no such indication of a change in kind for the Tyche of Constantinople. The statue remained in its shrine, in the city centre, until the late 6th c. It enjoyed ceremonial honours, up to the time of Malalas, which had not been significantly affected by Christianisation, except perhaps with the ending of the sacrifices carried out by Julian.

CIVIC HEROES

One rare statue type, found in civic space, was the image of a mythical hero, perhaps a demi-god, who had a special relationship to a city, as a founder or patron, perhaps displayed within in a small *heroon*, as Pausanias witnessed for the statue and tomb of Ajax in the agora of Salamis, which was the focus of cult activity.⁶¹ We still have a little evidence for these statues in late antiquity, suggesting some reluctance to remove such images from the streets and squares of Christian cities. Thus a statue of Mars with Romulus and Remus—set up by the emperor Maxentius (306–312), next to the Lapis Niger in the Roman Forum—was never removed, despite Maxentius' *damnatio*, and the centrality of Romulus to this emperor's ideological programme, or the fact that Romulus was worshipped as a god by pagans.⁶² Here the association of Romulus as the city's founder was too strong to permit its removal. A similar situation seems to have existed at Ephesus, whereby a statue of the boar which led Androclus to found the city was kept on display. Friezes recalling the legend, whereby the hero followed the advice of a Delphic oracle, to follow a fish and a boar to the site of the city, were installed on the 'Temple of Hadrian' on the Embolos street sometime in the late 3rd or 4th c., and remained prominently visible throughout the period.⁶³ Finally, a 3rd–4th c. spell

⁶⁰ Abthugni: *AE* (1991) 1644, Ferchiou (1990); Lepelley (forthcoming).

⁶¹ Ajax at Salamis: Paus. 1.35.3; Orestes at Sparta: 3.11.10 (in agora); Aratus at Sicyon 2.9.6 (near bouleuterion which should be in the agora).

⁶² Rome, image of Mars and city founders: *CIL* 6.33856 = *ILS* 8935. See also Curran (2000) 60–62. Maxentius and Romulus: Cullhed (1994) 46–49, 63–64.

⁶³ Ephesus, a statue of the boar: *IE* 2.501. Friezes: see n. 112 below.

from Antinoopolis suggests that the spirit of Antinoos, in whose name the city had been founded, was still venerated.⁶⁴

This small amount of evidence cannot be made to support an argument for widespread survival. Nevertheless, it is worth considering these cases alongside evidence for strong continuing interest by civic elites in urban origins and foundation stories—reflected in the writing of *patria* in the 6th c. These were produced for such cities as Miletus, Tralleis, Nysa and Nacolea, none of which ever attained the status of provincial capital, as well as *metropoleis* such as Aphrodisias, Tarsus and Anazarbos, and imperial cities such as Antioch and Constantinople.⁶⁵ They may have wished to preserve civic heroes and their statues, just as some *heroa* (monumental tombs of semi-divine heroes, which could hold statues) were still tolerated in some cities, and occasionally venerated.⁶⁶ Yet from this evidence, the most one could argue is for a gradual and probably peaceful decline in the honouring of civic founders and patron demi-gods. But in one place there was a final addition to this tradition which endured into later centuries.

At Constantinople, we see extensive honours given to the founder, and his public statue venerated. According to the 8th c. *Parastaseis*, the statue of Constantine on the column in his forum was the focus of both the foundation itself and of anniversary rituals of the city.⁶⁷ Indeed, as Bassett has argued, the wider statue decoration of the square by Constantine evoked the foundation legends of old Rome, now retold for new Rome.⁶⁸ To those attending ceremonies at the column, the rituals performed must have suited the heroic founder of a city, echoing the honours paid at *heroa* described by Pausanias for 2nd c. Greece.⁶⁹ It is worth speculating that Constantine might have originally planned to

⁶⁴ Antinoos: Gager (1992) 99–100, no. 28, comments by Karivieri (2010) 411.

⁶⁵ *Patria*: Moffat (1990) 87–109; Berger (1988) 35–37; von Christ (1924) vol. 2, 960, 973, 1039.

⁶⁶ *Heroa*, most important examples: Ephesus *heroon* thought to belong to the Ptolemaic princess Arsinoe IV, survived the period on the Embolos Street, with its occupant's tomb undisturbed: Thür (1990). Arykanda: Christian crosses present on tower tombs in city centre of Xanthos, and on monumental tombs next to baths: J. des Courtils pers. comm. and my own site observation 2005. A statue was present in the NW *heroon* of Sagalassos: Waelkens *et al.* (1997) 184. Waelkens *et al.* (2000) 572–73. Statue of Ajax at Salamis: Paus. 1.35.3.

⁶⁷ *Parastaseis* 56 discussed by Bauer (2001) 34–37; Frolov (1944). Private devotion: Theod. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.34.

⁶⁸ Decoration of forum of Constantine: Bassett (2004) 68–71, 75–76.

⁶⁹ Honours paid to heroes: Paus. 1.35.3 (Ajax at Salamis); 2.11.7 (Alexanor and Euamerion in Messene). See Larson (1995) 13–16 for more references.

have been buried under the column, as had his portrait-model Trajan at Rome. This would have completed a *heroon*, later superseded by his mausoleum constructed at the Church of the Holy Apostles.⁷⁰ However, there were to be no further honours on this scale for civic heroes: the tradition ended with Constantine. Henceforth, the tombs of the saints, with their holy bodies rather than memorial statues, provided a new focus for cults of urban patrons.

MINERVA, GODDESS OF THE STATE?

Some cities enjoyed the protection of a tutelary god or goddess, who might be honoured with a major temple: as for Athena at Athens, Artemis at Ephesus, or Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, and but also sometimes with statues in public space. Such civic patronage of well-known gods and goddess, which could not be considered in an allegorical or neutral way, became unacceptable to some Christianised urban leaders. In terms of lone statues in public space, we find the statue of Athena Promachos by Pheidias, being removed from the Acropolis sometimes around the middle of the 5th c.,⁷¹ and a public statue of Artemis removed and replaced by a cross in a street at Ephesus. Also, the names of Artemis and Aphrodite were removed from public monuments in Ephesus and Aphrodisias respectively, the latter being one of a number of cities which decided to change its name to something more palatable (and positively Christian) in the 5th to 7th c.⁷²

Yet again, late antique Constantinople and Rome seem to show a different pattern. This is the use of statues of Athena/Minerva in the decoration of the forecourts of the city's senate buildings and in other central civic spaces. Athena/Minerva was the traditional deity of city protection—not only standing on the Athenian Acropolis—but also protecting Rome, through an ancient image known as the Palladion (a small wooden statue of Athena armed) which legend taught that Aeneas had brought from Troy. This was kept in the Temple of Vesta

⁷⁰ Constantine's mausoleum: Johnson (2009) 119–39.

⁷¹ Athena Promachos: Arethas *Schol. Arist. Or.* 50 t. III. Removal of statue from Acropolis during the lifetime of Proclus who died A.D. 485: Marinus *V. Procli* 30. Debate on statue identification: Bassett (2004) 188–92.

⁷² Artemis replaced by cross at Ephesus: *IvE* 4.1351. Name of Artemis removed: e.g. *IvE* 2.422; 2.508; 2.509. Name of Aphrodite removed: *ALA* 42. Changing of Aphrodisias to Stauropolis, and several Apollonias to Sozopolis: Roueché (1990) 149–50.

in Rome.⁷³ Malalas and the *Chronicon Pascale*, writing in the 6th and 7th c. respectively, record the story that this was brought from Rome by Constantine upon the foundation of the new capital and buried at the foot of his honorific column in the new forum.⁷⁴ This story lacks 4th c. confirmation, but should be taken at least half-seriously, as a Constantinian cameo shows the emperor holding this very statue, suggesting some special association.⁷⁵

There were other statues of Athena set up in Constantinople. There was one before the Senate in the Augusteion, and there was another very close by, in front of the Tychaion, perhaps in the basilica courtyard.⁷⁶ The most intriguing was a bronze statue of Athena on a column in front of the Senate in the Forum of Constantine: this monument was in total thirty feet high, and, from the suggestion of a 9th c. text, it has been proposed that it was statue of Athena Promachos mentioned above. A precise identification is impossible, given the loss of the original, and the late sources, which disagree. But what is clear is that, at least two, maybe three public squares had Athena statues in prominent places, in front of buildings closely associated with civic government. In the case of the Tychaion, a Palladion statue was also present here, whilst Constantine's forum may have had two of the same deity erected here. The Athena in the Augusteion was accompanied by a statue of Zeus, both located 'before the doors of the Senate'.⁷⁷

All this might seem to signify very little in the context of the reuse of other pieces of classical statuary in the squares of Constantinople, but it takes on a special meaning when one notes an image of Minerva restored at Rome in 472/73 by the urban prefect Anicius Acilius Aginatus Faustus, following a civil conflict.⁷⁸ A. Frascetti, in a recent study, follows R. Lanciani in placing this statue's find spot in the area

⁷³ Palladion legend and Temple of Vesta at Rome: see references in Bassett (2004) 206. Late antique awareness of its significance is shown in the late 4th c. *Historia Augusta*: SHA *Heliogab.* 3.

⁷⁴ Constantine and Palladion: Malalas 13.7; *Chron. Pasc.* A.D. 328, discussed by Bassett above.

⁷⁵ Constantinian cameo: Bassett (2004) 196, 205–206.

⁷⁶ Athena by Senate of Augusteion: Zos. 5.24.7. In front of Tychaion: Procop. *Goth.* 1.15.11.

⁷⁷ Tychaion Palladion statue: Procop. *Goth.* 1.15.11–16. Athena in Constantine's forum: Arethas above, who is 9th–10th c. is the earliest source, followed by Constantine the Rhodian 150–163; Kedrenos 1.565; Nicetas Choniates 559–60. In Augusteion with a Zeus statue: Zos. 5.24.7. Bassett (2004) 151–52.

⁷⁸ Minerva statue restored at Rome A.D. 472/73: *CIL* 6.526, 1664 = *ILS* 3132.

next to the senate house, based on the context of other finds, in the antiquarian collection it came from, and the notes of an early scholar. He links it to the *Atrium Minervae*, which he proposes to be a contiguous space to the Senate.⁷⁹ It has been asserted that such a late restoration in Rome of a pagan statue should be considered a symptom of antiquarianism.⁸⁰ I would argue rather that the restoration was not necessarily antiquarian, but rather represented the re-erection of an important image intimately associated with the Senate on account of the traditional city-protecting role of Minerva/Athena and the associations of Roman political continuity which this statue evoked. Thus the statues of Athena at Constantinople might be seen as following a Roman model—copying a statue which had long stood next to the Senate in Rome, and which some senators still cherished.

THE IMPERIAL IMAGE

A final category of 'pagan statue' that retained a traditional function, when displayed in streets and squares, was the imperial image. This often took a prominent place in fora /agorai, and was displayed within the law courts and at public ceremonies exhibiting loyalty. On the simplest level, some emperors had come to be depicted in public space in the guise of, or associated with, statues of specific gods. Thus, Diocletian and Maximian encouraged their association with Jupiter and Hercules, as the senior and junior Augustus respectively. During their reign, dedications of statues were made to these gods in the streets and squares of African cities, as at Thubursicu Numidiarum and Thamugadi. Later, Maxentius included two statues of Hercules on the euripus of his circus outside of Rome, from where they have been excavated.⁸¹ The re-erection of a Jupiter column in Cirencester by a provincial governor (under Julian, or perhaps Eugenius) could be seen in similar terms. The Jupiter images which Eugenius set up in the Alps might have been columns of the same style, familiar in the north-western provinces of the empire.⁸² All of these images would

⁷⁹ Fraschetti (1999) 157–59, 164–70.

⁸⁰ Antiquarianism: Machado (2009).

⁸¹ Circus of Maxentius: Humphrey (1986) 282–87.

⁸² Thubursicu Numidiarum: bases for Jupiter and Hercules for safety of Diocletian and Maximian by *ordo* and people (*AE* (1940) 18 = *BCTH* (1940) xxvi–xxvii with *AE*

have focused attention on the emperors, for whom images of Jupiter and Hercules could convey sovereignty and strength in their dominions. Temples of Jupiter (and probably Hercules) were respectively included in the retirement villas of Diocletian and Galerius, revealing that these emperors sought to attract honours to themselves, through cult offered to these images.⁸³ A temple of Hercules restored at Ostia during Eugenius' reign suggests that some of his pagan supporters thought in these terms too.⁸⁴

Constantine famously depicted himself as Apollo-Helios/Sol on the great statue in his forum at Constantinople.⁸⁵ In this he might have been imitating Maxentius, who seems to have rededicated the Sol Colossus at Rome to his son Romulus, at the heart of his urban renovation project. Maxentius probably reshaped the face of the Colossus in Romulus' image as previous emperors had done. The Romulus dedication was soon removed, as the inscription was found re-used in the adjacent Arch of Constantine. Perhaps Constantine again reshaped this face to depict himself in the guise of Sol here in Rome, before erecting the better-known column in his Eastern capital in the same style.⁸⁶ Constantine's Arch seems to have been aligned with the Roman Colossus, making such use of it more plausible.⁸⁷

Julian was also attracted to Sol, as his own oration to the Sun suggests. The only record that we have (from the 8th c. *Parastaseis*) is of his representation in the guise of Apollo, with his wife as Artemis, in

(1957) 94 = *BCTH* 1954 (1956) 195–96 and *ILAlg* I. 1228 = *ILS* 9357) *Lep.* vol. 2 214–15. Thamugadi statues dedicated to Jupiter and Hercules for D. & M. (and Mars for Constantius Chlorus) on forum: *CIL* 8.2347 = 17813 = *ILS* 631; *CIL* 8.2346 = *ILS* 632; *CIL* 8.2345 = 17813 = *ILS* 633. Thamugadi tetrarchic statue *sacellum* with dedications to Jupiter, Hercules and Victory reused for monuments of Valentinianic dynasty: *BCTH* (1896) 284; *AE* (1895) 108 = *BCTH* (1891) 361; *Lep.* vol. 2 448–51. Cirencester: Collingwood-Wright, *RIB* 103, dating thanks to reference to 'the old religion' / *prisca religione*. Eugenius: see n. 87 below.

⁸³ Temples at Split and Romuliana: Mayer (2002) 75–79, 80–82 with further references.

⁸⁴ A *cella* of Hercules restored at Ostia, A.D. 393–94: *AE* (1948) 127 (under Eugenius). This may have been a hall rather than a temple suggests Boin (2010), based on a study of epigraphic usage of this term.

⁸⁵ Constantine as Apollo-Helios at Constantinople: see review of evidence in Bassett (2004) 192–202. For the appearance of Sol on coins of Constantine to A.D. 325/26 see Berrens (2004).

⁸⁶ Romulus Colossus inscription: Pierce (1989) 404. For history of Colossus see Lega (1993) 295–98, with discussion in Curran (2000) 61–62.

⁸⁷ Alignment of Arch of Constantine: Marlowe (2006).

some statues from Nicomedia. These statues could of course have been interpreted as the sun and the moon. Sozomen also records unspecific painted *imagines* showing Julian in the company of gods.⁸⁸

Neither Constantius II nor subsequent Christian emperors seem to have permitted such depictions, although the usurper Eugenius allowed the image of Hercules to be carried as the standard of his army in 394.⁸⁹ Yet such images, when monumentalised in the form of public statues, seem not to have been removed from streets and squares in the 5th or 6th c.: this seems a fair conclusion from the survival of such monuments in Africa, at Nicomedia and at Constantinople. The rays of Constantine's solar crown, on the statue in his forum, were eventually interpreted as the Holy Nails, but the wider context suggests that it was quite possible for 4th c. imperial images in divine guise to escape censure during all of late antiquity.⁹⁰

Most imperial statues in late antique cities were not of emperors in divine guises, but portrait statues in contemporary dress. Even so, they held a religious aura. Imperial portraits were throughout the period considered to be inviolate, and had to be treated as if they were the emperor himself.⁹¹ This situation arose as a consequence of centuries of the imperial cult. Honorific statues of reigning emperors had slowly come to be treated as having similar properties to the cult images of deified emperors, as a result of sacrifices to the living emperor's *numen*; and such honours for statues were seen to accrue to the emperor himself.⁹² Thus it is unsurprising to find that these images were considered to contain the presence of the emperor, just as idols could be inhabited

⁸⁸ Julian and wife at Nicomedia: *Parastaseis* 47. In company of gods: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3.

⁸⁹ Eugenius' images: August. *De civ. Dei* 5.26.3 (Jupiter); Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.4 (Hercules). Eugenius' imagery was probably less divisive for their supporters than these Christian writers might think: the naming of imperial body guards seen in the *Notitia Dignitatum* after 'Jovius' or 'Herculius' under the tetrarchy, meant that the reminder of these associations was widely present in the terminology of imperial power even at this date. *Porticus Ioviae* at Tarraco: *RIT* 91.

⁹⁰ Malalas saw many Hercules statues in his day, which might have been survivals of tetrarchic dedications with an imperial purpose: 6.16. Solar crown: Mango (1993a) 109.

⁹¹ Imperial images still considered to be inviolate: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 2.25; Amm. Marc. 14.7.12; *Cod. Theod.* 9.38.6 (A.D. 381); Joh. Chry. *Hom. in Mt.* 30.4 (PG 57.370). *Damnatio*; Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 9.11; Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 42.

⁹² Honours to images accruing to the emperor: Price (1984) 202–203.

by gods.⁹³ Eusebius records that Constantine prevented imperial images from being erected in temples, in order that 'he might not be contaminated by the error of forbidden things even in replica'.⁹⁴

Eusebius was clearly in favour of a change in the way that imperial statues were treated in public—probably here making a reference to sacrifice. Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom criticised the degree of reverence given to imperial statues, or the idea that they directly reflected the presence of the emperor, when writing in defence of those who had slighted images.⁹⁵ Yet other churchmen, such as Athanasius and Basil, accepted public honours given to imperial images without adverse comment. Sozomen noted that incense sacrifices to imperial images could be passively accepted by Christians under Julian, so long as they were not interpreted as worship.⁹⁶ However, traditional practices were still recognisable at the end of the 4th c.: so that a silver statue dedicated to the Augusta Eudoxia at Constantinople in A.D. 403 was accompanied by 'applause and popular spectacles of dances as was customary on the erection of statues of the emperors', whilst a pagan praetorian prefect dedicated a statue to Theodosius at Side with the 'traditional ritual'.⁹⁷

An attempt was made in 439 by Theodosius II (and Valentinian III) to control the devotion of his subjects—he forbade the funding of such images from non-imperial revenues and he earlier ruled to limit ceremonies associated with them, protesting that worship should be directed to the *supernum numen* (the Christian god) rather than his own.⁹⁸ Quite how enduring this legislation was is unclear. Under Phocas, imperial icons were still being brought into the hippodrome by white-robed attendants accompanied by candles for public veneration.⁹⁹ Even so, the absence of Christian concern, after the early 5th c., suggests that incense sacrifice had been eliminated and other rituals curbed.

⁹³ On conceptions of the divine nature of *simulera* see Stewart (2002) 20–35, 68, 87–90.

⁹⁴ Constantine's image in temples: Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 4.16.

⁹⁵ Criticising esteem given to imperial statue: Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 141.9; Joh. Chry. *Hom. ad pop. Ant.* 3.18 (PG 48.56–57); 17.3 (PG 49.173).

⁹⁶ Accepting honours: e.g. Ath. *Or. III c. Arianos* 5 (PG 26.332); Basil *de spiritu sancto* 18.45 (PG 32.149). Incense sacrifices before Julian: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.17, Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.17.3.

⁹⁷ Eudoxia: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 8.20. Theodosius: Nollé (1993) vol. 1 329–31, no. 52

⁹⁸ Laws limiting erection of and honours to imperial statues: *Cod. Iust.* 1.24.3–4 (A.D. 439); *Cod. Theod.* 15.4.1 (A.D. 425/28). See Zuckerman (2002) 250.

⁹⁹ Phocas image in hippodrome: *Chron. Pasc.* Olympiad 347=A.D. 610.

Certainly, the legislation of 425/28 and 439 did not end the dedication of statues beyond the capital, as proposed by C. Zuckerman.¹⁰⁰ Two statues were established for the Augusta Eudocia in Antioch in 444, and one dedication is known for Leo and Anthemius (467–72) at Tarraco. Furthermore, Anastasius was honoured with statues at Dara and probably at Dures, with Justinianic examples known at Justiniana Prima, Antioch in Pisidia, and probably Ankara, with Phocas honoured at Rome.¹⁰¹ In fact the fall-off in dedications beyond the first quarter of the 5th c. fits a wider pattern of a reduction in statue dedications at this time, rather than a special elimination of imperial monuments.

Furthermore, these laws did not eliminate the special function of imperial images in public space. Both secular and patristic literature demonstrates that during the period images of the emperor were considered as direct substitutes for his person, and so carried all the authority of his office.¹⁰² Thus petitions were attached to a statue of Leo (near the palace) when he was emperor, in order to be collected and read by the emperor himself;¹⁰³ fugitives claimed asylum at imperial statues;¹⁰⁴ icons were given to provincial governors to use on occasions where imperial authority was to be invoked; and they were received by provincials as if welcoming the *adventus* of the emperor.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Zuckerman (2002) 251.

¹⁰¹ Imperial statues: Eudocia at Antioch (2): *Chron. Pasc.* Olympiad 306, A.D. 444. Leo and Anthemius at Tarraco: *RIT* 100 (A.D. 468–72). Justinian at Antioch in Pisidia: Zuckerman (2002); at Justiniana Prima: Grabar (1948) 58 fig.1; at Aphrodisias: *ALA* 81, with interpretation by Zuckerman (2002) 252 with n.38. Anastasius at Dara: Malalas 16.10; at Dures there was a round foundation at the centre of the late 5th or 6th c. round plaza which the excavator suggests may have held imperial statues in this home city of Anastasius: John Wilkes *pers. comm.* Ankara: the honorific column of Julian has a capital of a style thought to be late 6th c.: Foss (1977) 65 n.152 for references. Rome, Phocas: *CIL* 6.1200 = 31259a = *ILS* 837 see Verduchi (1993).

¹⁰² Images as emperor: *Pan. Lat.* 8(4).15.6 (A.D. 297) 'the power of your divinity would be wherever your images and statues are honoured'; Amb. *In Ep. Ad Col.* 2.16–17 (PL 17.432), with Athanasius and Basil above.

¹⁰³ Column of Leo and petitions: *Patria* 2.31.

¹⁰⁴ Asylum: *Cod. Theod.* 9.44.1 (A.D. 386) = *Cod. Iust.* 1.25; Joh. Chry. *Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites* 3.14; Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 140.4.

¹⁰⁵ *Adventus* of imperial images as if emperor: e.g. Severian of Gabala early 5th c. Sever., *de lotion pedum* 8; Anthemius at Cple in A.D. 467: *Cer.* 1.87. Marcian at Rome ca. 450: *Chron. Min.* vol. 1 p. 490 (under Prosper Tironis *Epitoma Chronicon*). Phocas at Rome ca. 602: Greg. *Ep.* Appendix 8. As late as Council of Nicæa in 787: Mansi, vol. 12 1013.

The location of imperial images in urban space was strongly connected to their function, as explained by Severian of Antioch:

Think how many governors there are in the whole world. From the moment that the emperor is not in contact with them all, it is necessary that his image be posted in the tribunals, the markets and in meeting places and theatres, in all places in which the governor does business, in order that his acts have the necessary authority. (Severian, *de Mundi creatione* Or. 6.5 (PG 56.489))

The use of imperial images in this manner is attested for the law courts, which are illustrated by late antique depictions of the trial of Christ. That of the Rossano Gospels (6th c.) shows a governor flanked by soldiers carrying the imperial *imagines*, which also grace the cloth on his table. What appear to be a harmless pen and ink well are in fact the official insignia of office, given by the emperor to governors to sign legal judgements, the pen belonging in a special display case decorated with imperial portraits.¹⁰⁶ As if that was not enough, the governor in the Rossano depiction also holds his imperial letter of appointment under his chin—useful, as the imperial writing was as sacred as an imperial image, and thus physically inviolate.¹⁰⁷

Imperial icons were also displayed above city gates, not it seems simply as decoration, but as replaceable images, to signify who was the ruler. In the last years of the emperor Phocas, his insignia were cast down from the city gate of Nakius in Egypt, by its bishop Theodore, resulting in his execution by the general Bonosus.¹⁰⁸ Shortly afterwards, Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople placed an icon of the Virgin on the Golden Gate, during the Avar siege of 626, because she was the ruler of the city.¹⁰⁹ We can perhaps see this practice earlier: Constantine's image was erected above the gateways to the 'imperial palace districts' (βασιλείου) 'in various here cities', and on a high panel above the palace gate at Constantinople. Later, the 'Ruler' Christ was depicted above the imperial palace gate, perhaps as early as the later 6th c., and certainly by the early 8th.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Display case for pens: *Notitia Dignitatum* images for praetorian prefect for Illyricum and the proconsul of Achaia.

¹⁰⁷ Imperial written word inviolate, and destruction as treason: Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 13.2–3; Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 8.5; Thdot *Anc. ex. syb.* 1384. Letter of appointment worth a fight to the death: Procop. *Anecdota* 29.7–8.

¹⁰⁸ Image of Phocas cast down: John of Nikiu *Chronicle* 107.39.

¹⁰⁹ Icon on golden gate: Theodore Synkellos 106 [304] not seen.

¹¹⁰ Constantine's image and gates: Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 4.15, 3.3. Christ depicted above imperial palace gate by the early 8th c., when taken down by Leo III: Theophanes

Imperial statues of the 4th and early 5th c. sometimes appeared in streets and squares of cities amongst ordinary honorific statues of governors and past civic dignitaries. Yet the settings of these statues were not necessarily unstructured, as the Aelia Flacilla statue at Ephesus, surrounded by statues of victories, demonstrates. Special treatment of imperial statues would seem to be visible at Aphrodisias, where Late Roman images were concentrated on the *tetrastoon* square, outside the theatre. Here acclamations to governors seem to have been shouted, as attested by the painted slogans found at this spot.¹¹¹ At Constantinople, in the Senate, an imperial statue group of Honorius, Theodosius II and Pulcheria was dedicated in A.D. 414; an earlier statue group to the family of Constantine had also once been found here.¹¹² Likewise the Philadelphion was an important display point for statues of the Constantinian dynasty.¹¹³

In the 4th c. and early 5th c., we have several examples of more formal, independent monumental settings, resembling small temples, which might be considered as *sacella*, similar to the small imperial shrines inside the *principia* of forts. These might re-use an earlier shrine, set with imperial images. They are known from Thamugadi and Mactaris in Africa, from Ephesus (where the so-called Temple of Hadrian was used in this way), at Sagalassos (in the former tychaion), and perhaps from an inscription at Sepphoris.¹¹⁴ Statue bases were displayed in an orderly manner: at Ephesus the base of Maximian was

AM 6218 / A.D. 725/26. Perhaps by 6th c., if description contained within *Parastaseis* 5b is from around A.D. 600 as Mango thinks (it contains images of Maurice and family, which would have been removed by Phocas): Mango (1959) 102.

¹¹¹ Aphrodisias tetrastoon square imperial statues: *ALA* 20–21; acclamations: *ALA* 75 and 77–78 and commentary, with Roueché (1999) 161–68, esp. 162.

¹¹² Honorius etc. in Cple Senate: *Chron. Pasc.* Olympiad 298=A.D. 414. Constantine Helena, and (less credibly) Fausta (executed in 326), removed from Senate by Theodosius II: *Parastaseis* 43.

¹¹³ Philadelphion: *Parastaseis* 69 with Bauer (1996) 228–35.

¹¹⁴ Thamugadi tetrarchic statue *sacellum* with dedications to Jupiter, Hercules and Victory reused for monuments of Valentinianic dynasty: *BCTH* (1896) 284; *AE* (1895) 108 = *BCTH* (1891) 361; Lep. vol. 2 448–51. At Mactaris a structure was built on the site of an earlier temple that seems to represent a square 'ciborium' honouring Constantius II and Julian: Picard (1957) 49–54, Lep. vol. 2, 292–93, *AE* (1955) 51 = *BCTH* (1951–52) 203. Ephesus: the temple structure was restored using spolia, which ought to be late antique: Miltner (1959) 266–69 with fig. 132, 282. For references to the controversy over a possibly late antique frieze added to the structure, see references in Bauer (1996) 284–85 nn. 86–87. Sagalassos: see entry in gazetteer on Tycheia. Sepphoris: Avi-Yonah (1961) 184–87. *SEG* 20 no. 417, *SEG* 26 no. 1667 = *AE* (1966) no. 496.

removed, perhaps from *damnatio*, although a new imperial figure, Theodosius the father of Theodosius I eventually took its place.¹¹⁵ After the first decade of the 5th c. no 'sacella' of this kind are known for statues, but carefully inscribed groups of imperial acclamations (perhaps accompanied by painted portraits) continued to be displayed in monumental settings up to the early 7th c., as for Heraclius at Gortyn, and for Phocas both at Ephesus, and at Rome, where his icon was deposited in a church next to the palace when it arrived in the city.¹¹⁶

These small *sacella* were not equivalent to the large imperial cult temples of the 1st to 3rd c. A.D., which show an entirely different pattern. This suggests an imperially-led reform. The large temples were speedily removed from cities during the 4th c., quicker it seems than other classes of temple: at Alexandria and Antioch, the great Kaisaria were quickly converted by Constantius II and Valens respectively, whilst other temples in each city subsisted for longer; at Ostia, the parts of the Temple of Rome and Augustus were built into the foundations of a 4th to early 5th c. plaza, whilst the neighbouring capitolium was restored: at Ephesus, imperial cult temples seem to have been thoroughly obliterated by the late 4th c., whilst in contrast the Temple of Serapis was preserved.¹¹⁷

These great temples were very dominant in some cities, being the latest and often largest to be constructed; their disappearance spoke volumes about the new religious convictions of emperors after Constantius. Thus the small 4th/early 5th c. *sacella* for imperial images may reflect a desire to provide a degree of continuity in the urban setting of imperial honours, at a time of great change. Such structures were not built beyond the early 5th, though neither were they removed, in contrast to other 'temples'. This can be explained in terms of the special reverence that imperial images attracted even after the death of an emperor. Perhaps the temple to the Flavian dynasty permitted by Constantine at Hispellum was something really very small, more like the hemicycle of Thamugadi, or the

¹¹⁵ Ephesus, Theodosius statue taking place of Maximian: *IvE* 2.305–306.

¹¹⁶ Acclamations of Heraclius at Gortyn, inscribed on a nymphaeum opposite the *praetorium*: Maiuri (1914); Phocas at Ephesus, on the Marble Street: Roueché (1999). Phocas icon at Rome: Greg. *Ep.* Appendix 8.

¹¹⁷ Kaisareion of Antioch: Malalas 13.30. Kaisareion of Alexandria: *Ath. Hist. Ar.* 74.2, a mint was also operated from this complex: *Hist. Aceph.* 2.9. Ostia: Lavan (forthcoming a), and for survival of capitolium see: Albo (2002), which shows degree of preservation, though without discussing why.

tiny former tychaion of Sagalassos, and thus not as controversial as it might seem.¹¹⁸

So was there any change in the practice of honouring imperial images during the 4th or early 5th c.? The answer seems to be yes: sacrifices were ended and major temples were closed. Nonetheless, processions for imperial images were retained, and their monumental setting and urban function changed little: the associations they had and occasions on which they were used remained broadly the same. There had been some concessions to Christianity, but this was a tidying up of existing practice rather than a positive Christianisation.

IMAGES OF FORMER EMPERORS

One of the most intriguing aspects of the functions of imperial images in public space concerns the character they took on upon the death of the emperor they depicted. As explained above, Constantine's image in the eastern capital received annual honours from reigning emperors down to the time of Leo. Images were also dedicated and honoured posthumously to him at Rome.¹¹⁹ In the first half of the 5th c., exceptional honours were still being given both at the statue-column and at the tomb of Constantine in Constantinople. The honours given at the column included incense, lamps, and even sacrifice, with devotees offering vows as if to God, according to Philostorgius. This seems close to the kind of rituals which Diocletian perhaps envisaged at his temple-tomb complex at Split. At Constantinople, these practices eventually found their place in Christian ritual as honours to St Constantine. However, we have no record of homage of this kind from the mid-4th to 6th c. to other deceased sovereigns.¹²⁰

Later emperors could expect that their statue simply be respected after death, if their name had not been damned. Thus we find statues of Julian surviving in streets and squares at Ephesus, Sagalassos, Side, Caesarea Philippi (damaged but extant), at Oxyrhynchus, and at

¹¹⁸ Hispellum temple: *CIL* 11.5265 = *ILS* 705. For a recent look at the temple's significance see Goddard (2002).

¹¹⁹ Images at Rome: Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 4.69.

¹²⁰ Honours at Cplé statue: Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 1.34.3. Philostorgius *Hist. eccl.* 2.17. Honours for St Constantine: Mango (1993a).

Constantinople, in his harbour and in other contexts.¹²¹ Two examples of statues of Julian, at Aphrodisias and in the capital, did receive sharp treatment (being destroyed or rededicated under Theodosius I).¹²² Yet, given the wider context of survival, it looks like this was done for economy, perhaps due to the late completion of building works, rather than malice, as the late *Parastaseis* claims. Even Theodosius had to cede his place to Anastasius after the statue on his column of his forum fell down, and an equestrian statue of Arcadius was transformed into Justinian for his own column.¹²³ Elsewhere, we do occasionally find statues of damned emperors escaping censure and those who were praised having their names erased. Thus the process of survival was not entirely coherent.¹²⁴

Imperial legislation demanded that such images be treated with particular respect, for example if moved during building works.¹²⁵ Certainly, there remained an association between such images and the legacy of emperors. According to Lactantius, Diocletian was seriously slighted during his retirement by the removal of some of his images in connection with those of the damned Maximian. Procopius records a mystical appreciation of the aura remaining in a royal image when he describes the gradual disintegration of a mosaic of Theodoric in the agora of Naples. It progressively lost its limbs, as this ruler's political legacy declined.¹²⁶ However, images of past emperors might be cherished. In an imperial letter of Constantine concerning the community of Orcistos, it is clear that civic leaders had argued that the

¹²¹ Julian statues: Ephesus, lower agora: *IvE* 7.3021. Sagalassos from site visit and pers. comm. W. Eck; Side: Nollé (1993) vol. 1, 327. no. 50. Caesarea Philippi from Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.21.1–4 with Philostorgius *Hist. eccl.* 7.3, which omits the statue of Julian. Oxyrhynchus: *V. Petri Ib.* 72 (not seen). Cple, Harbour of Julian, surviving to late 6th c.: Malalas 18.22. Cple, statues of Julian and his wife with Constantine and his sons and Gallus: *Parastaseis* 44a. Cple, statue of Julian on a porphyry column in Constantinian porticoes: *Parastaseis* 49. Rome and Antioch, panel icons and bronze statues of Julian: *Parastaseis* 49.

¹²² Statue of Julian outside Mint at Cple destroyed by Theodosius I: *Parastaseis* 46. Aphrodisias statue of Julian converted to Theodosius: *ALA* 20. A third possible is *AE* (1949) 134 at Thamugadi, although a contemporary dedication to the same emperor survives: *CIL* 8.2387.

¹²³ Anastasius statue put on Theodosius column: Malalas 16.13. Arcadius statue changed to Justinian: Malalas 18.94.

¹²⁴ For a survival of statues of Crispus and an erasure of the name of Diocletian at Thamugadi see: Lep. vol. 2, 448–50, *CIL* 8.17882, Vars (1901) 223, *BCTH* (1902) 147.

¹²⁵ Protection for statues of previous emperors: *Cod. Theod.* 15.1.44 (A.D. 406).

¹²⁶ Diocletian: Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 42. Theodoric: Procop. *Goth.* 1.24.22–27.

place ought to be treated as a city because it had statues of 'venerable princes' adorning its agora.¹²⁷ At Alexandria, images of past emperors, including Theodosius I, were paraded in the street on special occasions.¹²⁸ Here one suspects that something of the status and mystical presence of imperial statues survived the death of the ruler they depicted. At Oxyrhynchus, the statue of Julian was even said to descend from its pedestal at night to harass by-passers.¹²⁹

A desire to conserve the images of 'good' emperors can also be seen in the monumentality of late antique cities, as recorded by art and archaeology. Statues of Marcus Aurelius and Hadrian can be clearly seen flanking Constantine in his address to the Forum of Rome, depicted on his Arch, whilst, according to the *Patria*, statues of Hadrian and Septimius Severus enjoyed their place in the fora of the eastern capital.¹³⁰ In the streets and squares revealed by archaeology, the conservation of imperial statues is remarkable—eastern cities like Ephesus, Aphrodisias, Sagalassos and Antioch in Syria still proudly displayed such monuments of 4th c. emperors (and even those of the 1st to 3rd) in their streets and squares up to the late 6th or 7th c. A.D.¹³¹ These ornaments might not always be as old as some cities liked to pretend—we find Thubursicu Numidarum moving statues of Trajan and Constantine into its new forum in A.D. 355–62, whilst a late antique esplanade at Caesarea Palestinae featured a re-used imperial porphyry colossus, probably taken from an imperial cult temple.¹³² At Cyrene, we actually find a late 4th c. audience hall, on the agora of the

¹²⁷ Orcistos: Chastagnol (1981) 386, 406–407.

¹²⁸ Procession of images of past emperors at Alexandria: Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria *A Homily on the Virgin* 90.1–2 in Worrell (1923) 308–309, transl. 375 (not seen). Processions of imperial images in the Principate: Price (1984) 189–90.

¹²⁹ Oxyrhynchus, Julian statue: *V. Petri Ib.* 72 (not seen).

¹³⁰ Hadrian and Septimius Severus in fora of Cple: *Patria* 2.38, 2.19 and *Parastaseis* 20.

¹³¹ Imperial statue survival: Ephesus, upper agora statue of Constantius, base found with two statues, thus probably also of Constantius: *IvE* 4.1316–17, Augustus in basilica: Alzinger (1972–75) 262–65, 296. Aphrodisias: *ALA* 20–21. Antioch statue of Constantine on agora, visible in mid-6th c.: Malalas 13.3. Sagalassos with details of statue display of 4th c. and 1st to 3rd c. rulers to early 7th c. see on agorai: Lavan (forthcoming b). For streets in the same city see Lavan (2009). See also references to surviving statues of Julian above.

¹³² Thubursicu Numidarum: during the restoration of *forum novum* under Constantius II (355–61) and Julian (361–62): *ILAlg* 1.1275; *ILAlg* 1.1276; some statues were transferred here as part of the same operation, such as Trajan and Constantine in *ILAlg* 1.1247 = *ILS* 9357, and *Felicitas Augusti*: *ILAlg* 1.1285. Caesarea Palestinae: Yevin (1955), now discussed by Myrup (forthcoming).

city, with a composite statue of Marcus Aurelius—made up of several different pieces. Evidently, such statues were worth keeping, probably providing an afterglow of numinous imperial authority which added to the dignity of the public spaces in which they were set.¹³³

CONCLUSIONS

The survival of statues of Victory, Tyche, Minerva and emperors (past and present), beyond the early 5th c., seems to represent something different to the museological display of former cult statues, seen at Constantinople and elsewhere. The statues considered in this article enjoyed greater prominence in public space than other images, but retained some aspects of their traditional rituals, even if these had been reformed to exclude overtly religious acts. It seems that residual ‘pagan’ images which were traditionally associated with political power were still being used in specific urban settings for very traditional purposes, especially in upholding the status of Rome and Constantinople, of the emperor, and his attribute of ‘victory’. These images, which provided a traditional sanctification of state authority, were still being dedicated, or survived in context, into the 5th c. and in some cases into the 6th c. Imperial images were the most prominent of these survivals, but their story is not wholly exceptional: their use was reformed a little, but not a lot, as were the uses of other ‘political’ images.

Yet the fate of ‘pagan’ statues which traditionally played the same role in ordinary cities was very different. For Tyche or tutelary deities outside of the capitals, rituals were discontinued and public statues removed, in the late 4th or early 5th c. This difference could be partly explained by the survival of a functioning political topography at Rome and Constantinople, with its fora (complete with senate houses) surviving to the 6th c. But the high status of imperial images, of Victory, and indeed of the Tyche of Rome extended beyond the conservative capitals, so revealing that this was part of a general trend. Thus the legal texts on the suppression of paganism do not reflect the full reality of imperial attitudes to ‘pagan’ images. Much of the traditional iconography of imperial power, including images which

¹³³ Cyrene, Marcus Aurelius statue, composed of reworked pieces: Stucchi (1965) 312–18.

were originally understood as cult statues, was retained into the 6th c. A.D., and radical attempts at reform did not endure.

Quite what this continuity meant in terms of religious allegiance is difficult to say. It would be foolish to see here evidence for 5th c. pagan belief, let alone 6th c. pagan belief. Nevertheless, in a capital city where the emperor was festooned with victories, where the Tyche of the City was visible as a statue in the civic centre, where Minerva played a prominent role in decorating the Senate, and in which imperial statues received special honours, it must have been fairly easy to accommodate a quiet conservative with an unreformed understanding of the role of the old gods in protecting the State. Some Christians may have tried to reinterpret unaltered images in new ways: but against the single example of *Dea Roma* = *Urbs aeterna Roma* from Abthugnos, there is otherwise only evidence of continuity in traditional practices.

Christians were able to remove the most offensive aspects of public ritual: sacrifices to Victory and Tyche, or elaborate rituals in front of imperial statues. However, known attempts to physically remove these images from public space are confined to the short-lived removal of the Statue of Victory from the senate house at Rome. There was definitely no rupture in wider court art and no iconographic victory of Christianity in the 4th and 5th c. Neither was there later any final conflict over these images. This tradition of increasingly inappropriate symbols just petered out in the later 6th c. Only the imagery of the emperors survived into the 7th c. with some of its earlier associations intact, although older court art seems to have been respected throughout the medieval history of Constantinople.

Should we see this slow decline of pagan political statuary as evidence of religious tolerance in the eastern capital? Admittedly, such continuity could have provided some crumb of comfort to aristocratic pagans, who, during the 5th c., might have found enough of their tradition in the city to accept the Christianisation of other spheres of life. Yet, it is unlikely that we have here evidence of successful resistance by a closet group of high-ranking pagans. Perhaps it was necessary to keep some pagans on-side in the late 4th c., but, beyond the early 5th c., pagan senators were a shrinking minority at both Rome and Constantinople. Rather, it seems more likely that it was prominent lay Christians who felt unable to abandon these politically critical statues, partly on account of the complex traditional beliefs which they still entertained, alongside their Christianity.

Ultimately, an unorthodox belief in statues as political talismans, shared by both the pagan Zosimus and the Christian Malalas, may have counterbalanced attempts to Christianise imperial iconography in the early 5th c. Contemporary military events perhaps made it difficult to contemplate change: it is not easy to remove statues of Victory when you are losing. Christian bishops won some concessions but did not attempt an ideological ‘conquest of urban space’. They did not seek to Christianise the senate house, the *tychaion*, or the hippodrome, as modern scholars might expect. Rather, Christian activists were content to build up their own new institutions with their own ‘Christian topography’, and to allow the iconography of pagan imperial power to slowly fade, into becoming part of the venerable decor of medieval Constantinople.

APPENDIX: THE FATE OF TYCHAIA

Caesarea in Cappadocia (not necessarily Tyche of the city): Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.1–5 and 5.11, Greg. Naz. *Or.* 4.92. Gaza: demolished in 402, after an imperial decree, according to a problematic source, written at least 40 years after the event: *V. Porph.* 65–66. Apamea: destruction of *tychaion* on agora of city is undated *pers. comm.* from D. Viviers excavator of Apamea. Sagalassos: *Tychaion* identification: Talloen P. (2003) *Cult in Pisidia. Religious Practice in Southwestern Asia Minor from the Hellenistic to the Early Byzantine Period* (Ph.D. diss. Univ. of Leuven 2003) text vol. 1 69–70, vol. 2 103, catalogue vol. 2 no. 573, fig. 220; Talloen P. and Waelkens M. (2004) “Apollo and the emperors I. The material evidence for the imperial cult at Sagalassos”, *Ancient Society* 34 (2004) (171–216) 188–91. Waelkens M., Pauwels D. and van den Bergh J. (1995) “The 1993 excavations on the upper and lower agora”, in *Sagalassos III Report on the Fourth Excavation Campaign of 1993*, edd. M. Waelkens and J. Poblome (Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia Monographiae 7) (Leuven 1995) 24–25. Dedications to Gratian, Valentinian II and Flavia Eudoxia: Devijver H. and Waelkens M. (1995) “Roman inscriptions from the upper agora at Sagalassos”, in *Sagalassos III. Report on the Fourth Excavation Campaign of 1993*, edd. M. Waelkens and J. Poblome (Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia Monographiae 7) (Leuven 1995) 118–19 nos. 4–6, suggesting that the whole ensemble was set up to honour (Flavia) Aelia Eudoxia (*Augusta* A.D. 400–404), perhaps connected to the building of the city wall around A.D. 400. There is a rectangular water damage mark on the paving on the side facing the agora where the altar probably stood until removed in or before the conversion. Nothing else of this monument seems to have been spoliated, except the columns supporting the canopy: Lavan L. (forthcoming) “The agorai of Sagalassos in Late Antiquity: an interpretative study”, *AnatSt* (forthcoming). Alexandria: *tychaion* transformed into a wine shop, described by Palladas, who lived there: *Anth. Graec.* 9.180–84, where hot wine was available: 9.184. This building was known to be towards

the centre of the city, where the agora was located. Its position on the agora is conjectural, though it is usual for these structures: Adriani A. (1966) *Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano Series C 2 vols.* (Palermo 1966) 258–59. Statuary still there in early 7th c.: Theoph. Sim. 8.7.7–11. Antioch in Syria: converted into martyrrium for Ignatius, during reign of Theodosius II: Evagr. *Hist. eccl.* 1.16. Perge: possible *tychaion* in *tetragonos* agora thought to have been transformed into a secondary use, perhaps as a fountain or cistern, with a brick dome and water pipes added. There is nothing to date this however (no visible reused material), or to confirm the earlier function as a temple: site visit by author May 2003, Mansel A. M. (1975) "Bericht über Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in Pamphylien 1957–1972", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1975.1) 79–81.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ALA = C. Roueché ed. *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989).
 BCTH = *Bulletin archeologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques*.
 CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum Series Latinae*.
 GCS = *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*.
lvE = *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* (Bonn 1979–84).
 Lep. = C. Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas Empire*, 2 vols. (Paris 1979).
 MGH AA = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctorum Antiquissimorum*.
 RIT = G. Alföldy ed., *Die römischen Inschriften von Tarraco* (MF 10) (Berlin 1975).

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 Ath. Or. III c. Arianos = PG 26.11–526.
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RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AND PAGAN STATUARY

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Abstract

A number of surviving statues, both divine and imperial, have come down to us because they were intentionally buried during Late Antiquity. These have included well-preserved examples, as well as others which were mutilated. Some of the statues were damaged by their collapse during earthquakes and were subsequently buried under rubble; others were deliberately mutilated before their intentional burial; others still were intact because they had been carefully hidden. From the manner in which ancient statues were buried, a wide range of motivations can be inferred.

THE RHETORIC OF INTOLERANCE TOWARDS PAGAN CULT STATUARY

The Demonisation of Gods and Goddesses

Statues of deities were extremely numerous, and were found not only in temples, but also in public squares, bath-houses, and the gardens and residences of the wealthy.¹ Most people took their presence for granted during the 4th c.; they were part of the urban landscape and many were valued for their beauty. Indeed, Constantine imported famous statues to adorn Constantinople, probably because it was unimaginable to have an imperial city devoid of statuary.² Whatever their religious background, urban dwellers were familiar with statuary; they were part of the culture. For example, mythological examples referred to celebrated episodes in the lives of deities, which educated persons would have read about in Homer. Therefore, wealthy educated homeowners enjoyed displaying such statues in their houses: the presence of these objects testified to the social standing and education of their

¹ Eck (2008); Stewart (2003).

² Bassett (2004); Barnes (1981); Caseau (2007).

owners. Statues had a positive image in the world of Late Antiquity as W. Eck states: "Statues served as one of the most important media by which both the community and the individual remembered persons of significance for the city, be they heroes, emperors, imperial magistrates, or important individuals in the local community".³

Although mythological sculptures were numerous, they were not as important as cult statues, which were kept inside temples, even if replicas of cult statues could be placed in different environments. Thus, nothing prevented a worshipper offering garlands of flowers or incense to a cult statue in a temple, or to a replica found within the home. Although not all mythological statues were cult statues, some Christians believed otherwise. Statues of gods reminded them of the numerous deities they had rejected. While most Christians viewed their statues with indifference, some considered their presence offensive. The fact that they could still receive sacrifices, meant that for some Christians, it was important that they should be discarded or destroyed. Initially, the conversion of a large proportion of the Roman population to Christianity had no impact on statuary. However, converting to Christianity entailed a clear and definitive renunciation of idolatry, which meant a complete ban on sacrifices and an expulsion of all idols, including those in the family *lararium*. In ordinary households, this cleaning up of ancient religious objects was not difficult to achieve, but in aristocratic villas, where statues were plentiful, it was likely that the expulsion concerned only the *lararium*, and not the ornamental statues. Yet this scenario was dependent on everyone in the household converting to Christianity. Therefore in mixed families, composed of adepts of the traditional cults and Christians, statues probably remained untouched, as owning statues was proof of social status which the upper classes were reluctant to relinquish.⁴

In order to make sure converts got rid of religious statues and altars, Christian preachers created a very negative discourse towards statues. They were equated to idols, whether or not they received sacrifices, and their mere presence was deemed offensive and most dangerous, because they could harbour demons. To achieve a total and complete reversal of the idea that the gods protected the city and the family, Christian writers gave examples of the menace demons posed to

³ Stirling (2008a); Stewart (2003); Varner (2000); Hannestad (1994).

⁴ *V. Mel.* 14 (Gorce 1962).

Christians. They created a rhetoric of intolerance towards the statues of the gods which allowed them to reverse long-standing opinions. Far from protecting mankind, these statues gave the demons that lived within them an opportunity to practise evil.⁵ From their statues, they could spy and plot against unsuspecting Christians; their elimination was therefore an act of self-protection.

Instead of showing their powerlessness, such a discourse made demons active participants in evil. This 'demonisation' of pagan deities led some Christians to think that they might be in danger when surrounded by statues of the gods.⁶ Stories of statues falling on Christians were chronicled in the Lives of Saints and in patristic literature.⁷ Christians were encouraged not to live in places where divine statues were present: firstly, because they could receive sacrifices, which attracted demons, and secondly, because they provided a place where demons could reap vengeance on newly converted Christians. To make their point, however, Christian writers had to enforce the idea that deities could animate their statues and reside in them, an idea that was not necessarily accepted by traditional worshippers. Christian writers used their knowledge of theurgy to explain how pagans attracted deities (now called demons) into their statues, thus making them dangerous objects for Christians. However, theurgy was quite esoteric and did not represent mainstream religious philosophy. Therefore, when a devotee offered grains of incense in front of a statue, they did not necessarily imagine that the god was physically present.⁸

Over time, this Christian discourse was successful. The fears provoked by pagan ritual are attested in many 4th c. sources. Lactantius reports that at the time of Diocletian, the Christians in the emperor's court had to take part in sacrifices carried out by him. 'While assisting at one of these sacrifices, they made the immortal sign on their forehead, chasing away the demons and disrupting the pagan rites'.⁹ The immortal sign was the sign of the cross, a gesture used by Christians to protect themselves. This passage suggests that Christians of the early 4th c. now feared the old gods. Christians at court also avoided the sacrificial meals held by Diocletian's mother, so as to respect the ancient

⁵ Kahlos (2009); Drake (1996).

⁶ Vermander (1982); Brakke (2006); Brakke (2008).

⁷ Dagron (1984).

⁸ Iles Johnston (2008).

⁹ Lactant. *De mort pers.* 11.88–89.

order not to eat sacrificial meat, which the Apostles had imposed on new converts; 'You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from the meat of strangled animals'. (Acts 15.29).

The fear of sacrifices, described as '*sacrificia nefanda*' by Lactantius, is partly connected to the idea that sacrifices attracted demons to earth.¹⁰ Firmicus Maternus, recalling the Neoplatonic ideas of Porphyry, explains that '...the impure spirits of the demons muster themselves in the statue itself, as in other statues, following continual sacrifices'.¹¹ Christian writers were mostly responsible for spreading this notion of inhabited statuary. In the *Vita Martini* by Sulpicius Severus, a demon appears to Martin displaying traits common to Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Minerva.¹² From this we are to understand that when Martin saw a statue of a god, he was reminded of Satan. Indeed, some Christians believed that rituals could call the gods forth.¹³ This arguably led to fear of the presence of divine statues in some Christian circles.

The *Life of Severus* by Zachariah Scholasticus recalls the frightening experience of monks and students charged with spending the night in a temple full of idols, to whom sacrifices had been offered on a daily basis.¹⁴ The local priest was too scared to stay but the monks reassured themselves by chanting psalms such as: 'For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens' (Ps 96:5), 'All worshippers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before Him' (Ps 97:7), or 'Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; they make no sound in their throats'. (Ps 115:5-7) This same fear accounts for the stories of the removal of idols in Egypt, after the fall of the Serapeum.¹⁵ If we are to believe Rufinus of Aquileia, the destruction of the cult statue of Serapis in A.D. 391 was the catalyst for the widespread eradication of idols in Alexandria:

¹⁰ Lactant. *De mort pers.* 10.89.

¹¹ Firm. Mat. *Err. prof. rel.* 13.4: *sed in ipso simulacro sicut in ceteris ex assiduīs sacrificiis immundi daemonum spiritus colliguntur* (author's translation).

¹² Sulp. Sev. *V. Mart.* 22.

¹³ Heim (1996).

¹⁴ Zac. Myt. *V. Sev.* (Haas (1997)).

¹⁵ Hahn (2008); Haas (1997).

The busts of Serapis, which were in people's houses, on the walls, in entrances, on doors as well as on windows, were all removed and destroyed, so that no trace, not even the name of this or of any other demon, remain anywhere, and in their place every one painted the sign of the Lord's cross on doors, entrances, windows, the walls and columns.¹⁶

In 6th c. hagiography, even hidden statues could be perceived as dangerous; the monks of Monte Cassino held a demon present in a hidden bronze statue responsible for the death of a young monk during the construction of the monastery.¹⁷ Christian authors all shared the idea that demons were evil entities, ready to hurt humans, especially Christians. Behind these demons, lay the devil himself, the serpent of the Bible. Authors such as Lactantius and Firmicus describe sacrifices offered to idols as contaminating. They believed that contact with sacrifices resulted in defilement. Therefore, Firmicus Maternus advised men to flee rather than risk contagion and ruin.¹⁸ Theodoret explains how Julian polluted the fountains and springs with his sacrifices, as well as the food in the marketplace with his ritual purifications: '...he had bread, meat, fruits, vegetables and all edible food sprinkled...'. When two Christian officers complained that the food and drink served at imperial banquets was contaminated, due to sacrificial acts, they were sentenced to death.¹⁹ These examples help to illustrate how important the notion of religious pollution is in understanding the rejection of statues believed to have been contaminated by sacrifices.

Some pious Christians worried about defilement. The fear of contamination through sacrifice was made explicit, at the end of the 4th c., in a letter written to Augustine by a pious layman named Publícola. He worried about the extent of contact he could have with foods contaminated by sacrifices. The letter was written in A.D. 398 when temples were officially closed, but had not yet lost their sacred, or from

¹⁶ Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 2.29: *Sed et illud apud Alexandriam gestum est, quod etiam thoraces Serapis, qui per singulas quasque domos in parietibus, in ingressibus et postibus etiam ac fenestris erant, ita abscisi sunt omnes et abradi, ut ne vestigium quidem usquam vel nominis appellatio aut ipsius aut cuiuslibet alterius daemonis remaneret; sed pro his Crucis Dominicae signum unusquisque in postibus, in ingressibus, in fenestris, in parietibus, columnisque depingeret.*

¹⁷ Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, 2.10.1–2.

¹⁸ Firm. *Mat. Err. prof. rel.* 26.2: *Tu haec faciens hominibus te miseris prodesse iactas ut crudelitate tua perimas, persuasione decipias, pollicitatione prosternas...fugite, o miseri homines, fugite, et contagionem istam quantacumque potestis celeritate deserite.*

¹⁹ Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.15.5–9.

a Christian perspective, demonic character. However, some temples continued to function as Publicola's questions reveal:

Is it permitted to drink from a spring or from a well into which something from a sacrifice has been thrown? May a Christian drink from a well that is located in a temple, if the temple is abandoned? If in a temple in which an idol is worshipped, there is a well or a spring of the idol and if no rite has been performed in the same well or spring, may a Christian draw water from it and drink?²⁰

Publicola, a conscientious Christian, clearly knew that all food offered in sacrifice must not be touched, but in the letter he explores the boundaries of this prohibition. Publicola wonders when pagan contamination begins: 'Should a Christian knowingly buy and eat vegetables or fruits from a garden or the land that belongs to an idol or their priests?'.²¹ Publicola, through his concerns, informs us of the effects of Christian rhetoric which describes the dangers of coming into contact with pagan cultic activity. This wealthy, yet worried and concerned individual revisited questions concerning religious pollution that were first formulated in the Mishnah and the Talmud.²² When Publicola asked Augustine, '...may a Christian bathe in a bath or hot springs in which sacrifice is offered to idols? May a Christian bathe in baths in which the pagans bathed on their feast day, either with them or without them?', he echoed Jewish instruction on the same topic.²³

In Jewish teachings, strict rabbis stated that contact with the world of idols led to impurity, defilement and pollution, yet they also drew lines between acceptable forms of contact and those which were forbidden. The Mishnah reports a debate between Proclus and Gamaliel, an important rabbi of the 1st c. and alleged teacher of St. Paul. Proclus wanted to know if a Jew could bathe in the Baths of Aphrodite. Gamaliel said that it would be an act of idolatry to go to places where sacrifices had taken place, however, this was not the case in baths, where the statues were just for decorative purposes.²⁴ Gamaliel makes an important distinction between an idol, '...what is treated as a god is forbidden...', and a statue '...what is not treated as a god is per-

²⁰ August. *Ep.* 46.14 (transl. Teske); Lepelley (2002).

²¹ August. *Ep.* 46.18 (transl. Teske).

²² Tosefta, 2.5-6.

²³ August. *Ep.* 46.15 (transl. Teske).

²⁴ Mishnah *Avodah Zarah*, 3.4.

mitted...'.²⁵ He mentions the fact that pious devotees of the goddess Aphrodite would not appear naked before her, yet they do just that at the baths. Augustine also provides a similarly nuanced view of proper Christian behaviour, stating that it was much better to abstain from what was offered in a sacrifice, even when suffering from hunger, but pointless abstaining from air, water and food in the fear that they were polluted by idols.²⁶

For many Christians, the distinction between idols and statues was self-evident. Imperial legislation was strict in forbidding sacrifices but it permitted idols to be transformed into statues by moving them from cult places to non-religious locations such as baths and public squares.

THE SECULARISATION OF STATUES

The closing of the temples raised the issue of what to do with the statues.²⁷ In A.D. 399 an imperial decree sent to Padua stated that idols still remaining in the temples which received sacrifices, despite an absolute ban, would be removed and placed under the control of the imperial authorities.²⁸ A similar text was sent to Rome soon after, in A.D. 407 which dictated that those temple statues which continued to be worshipped were to be pulled from their bases.²⁹ None of these texts demanded the destruction of statues, although this was not the case with altars. What seems proposed, therefore, was the secularisation of statues of pagan deities found within temple walls.

Religious statuary represented an important part of the heritage of cities: some pieces, indeed, were famous.³⁰ We know, thanks to epigraphic sources, that in certain cities cult statues were moved to baths or other public spaces in the second half of the 4th c., as at Puteoli,

²⁵ Mishnah *Avodah Zarah* 3.4.

²⁶ August. *Ep.* 47.

²⁷ The first order to close the temples is given under Constantius and Constans: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.4 (A.D. 346/54). The same pronouncement was given at Constantinople in 381 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.7), in 391 at Milan (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10) and in Egypt (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.11).

²⁸ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.18.

²⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.19.

³⁰ Stirling (2007).

in Italy, and at Cherchel, in Africa.³¹ These statues probably originated in temples, as revealed by the expressions *de sordentibus locis* and *ex abditis locis* found on some base inscriptions.³² At Verona a statue that had fallen down and was lying on the ground of the Capitol (*in Capitolio diu iacentem*) was moved into the forum.³³ Certain, presumably Christian, city officials therefore took advantage of a legal loophole in order to embellish their public spaces, in particular their bathhouses, with statues taken from temples.

However, the Theodosian Code reveals that some statues adorning large bath complexes were still used for pagan sacrifices. The devotees of the gods, now deprived of access to temples, were able to dedicate garlands and incense to the statues, despite their new setting. The Christian emperors, once made aware of this activity, decided to move the statues once again: 'If objects formerly consecrated by sacrifices drove men to error, they will be removed from the baths and public fervour, so that they can no longer offer enticement to those that are mistaken'.³⁴ Furthermore, although altars and temples were consistently targeted by imperial decrees, one does not find any order for the destruction of ornaments or statues, only their removal. Therefore, it is not in the imperial legislation that we must look to for the incentive behind the destruction of pagan statues. On the contrary, certain texts positively encourage the preservation of ornaments on public buildings.³⁵

As a consequence, it is necessary to look at other sources for the reasons behind the physical destruction of statues. Even if criticism of paganism and idolatry was a favourite theme among Christian authors, violence against idols was not overtly encouraged.³⁶ The sixtieth

³¹ Lepelley (1994); Witschel (2007). A list of further cases is provided by Roueché (2002), esp. 538–39.

³² *ILS* 5482; *ILS* 5478: *Signa translata ex abditis locis ad celebritatem thermarum Severianarum* (from Puteoli: Camodeca (1980–81).

³³ *CIL* 5.3332=*ILS* 5363: the inscription praises the favourable times that allowed the *consularis* Palladius to transfer a statue to the forum which had been knocked over. This period of tolerance occurred under Gratian and Theodosius (A.D. 379–83); Pietri (1982) 123.

³⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.20 announced at Ravenna in 415: *Sane si quondam consecrata sacrificiis deceptionem hominum praestiterunt, ab usibus lavacrorum vel publicis affectibus separentur, ne inlecebram errantibus praestent.*

³⁵ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3 (A.D. 346) and 16.10.15 (A.D. 399); Saradi-Mendelovici (1990).

³⁶ Thornton (1986).

canon of the Council of Iliberris refused the title of martyr to those Christians killed for attacking idols.³⁷ This Spanish canon, written at the beginning of the 4th c., confirms what we know about Christian behaviour in the 3rd c. and 4th c.: Christians did not seek to mark themselves out by attacking the official religion of the empire; they were simply ordered by their ministers to not participate in sacrifices and pagan feasts, and to avoid places of idol veneration. Yet, in the first half of the 4th c., we find, from the pen of a recent convert and former astrologer, the first clear and frank invitation to destroy pagan idols.³⁸ Firmicus Maternus recommends to the emperors Constans and Constantius II, to whom he addresses his work *De errore profanarum religionum*, a radical solution in accordance with the Bible: 'Remove, remove without hesitation, very holy emperors, the temple ornaments. These 'gods', let the fire of the moneyers' workshop or the foundry flame cook them!'.³⁹ It was once thought that Firmicus influenced the religious politics of the emperors he addressed. However, as we have seen, they only ordered the suspension of sacrifices, not the destruction of statues. Firmicus represents a brand of Christianity that wished to break away from the pagan past and promoted the physical elimination of pagan religious symbols.⁴⁰

One of the most prominent attackers of statues was Shenoute of Atripe who, if we trust his hagiography, was one of the monks who believed that conduct and behaviour should be based on the teachings of the Old Testament rather than secular law.⁴¹ He attacked not only the temples but also the idols preserved in the house of a rich man whom he had accused of being a crypto-pagan. The inhabitants of Shmin and Plevit denounced Shenoute's actions to the governor of Upper Egypt, but apparently Shenoute was too popular to receive a proper trial. According to his biographer, a triumphant crowd brought him out from the court. However, an edict from the Theodosian Code, that addresses the Praetorian Prefect Asclepiodotus, is perhaps a response to Shenoute's behaviour.

³⁷ Council of Iliberris canon 60: *De his qui destruentes idola occidunt. Si quis idola fregerit et ibidem fuerit occisus, quatenus in Evangelio scriptum non est neque invenietur sub apostolis unquam factum, placuit in numerum eum non recipi martyrum.*

³⁸ Turcan (1982) 7–72.

³⁹ Firm. Mat. *Err. prof. rel.*, 28.5.

⁴⁰ Caseau (2007a).

⁴¹ Emmel (2008); Frankfurter (2008); Emmel (2002).

We order that those persons who are truly Christian, or those who say they are, do not abuse the authority of the religion and that they do not dare attack Jews or pagans that live quietly and do not violate law or order. For, if such Christians act with violence and threaten the security of persons or steal their goods, they will be forced to return not only the property that they seized, but after a trial, they will be forced to return three or four times the sum that they stole. Also, the governors of provinces and their staff, and local leaders, who know about and allow such a crime to be committed, will be punished in the same manner as those that committed the crime.⁴²

Another group of Christians viewed the closing of temples as an opportunity to collect statuary and/or building material. They wished to benefit from the downfall of temples, and in that respect, they followed in the footsteps of the first Christian emperor, Constantine.

This movement towards the secularisation and spoliation of temple properties and statues was begun by Constantine, when he started turning confiscated temple treasure into money. As *pontifex maximus*, the emperor had the resources of the temples at his disposal.⁴³ Yet, he never introduced any legal measures that sought the destruction of the statues within them. Nevertheless, Constantine's biographer Eusebius of Caesarea claims that he lacked any scruples when dealing with cultic objects: '... the precious materials were pulled from the rich statues, he also attacked those made of bronze, dragging them out from their bases with ropes as if captives'.⁴⁴

DOMESTIC STATUARY IN CHRISTIAN HOUSES

The Constantinian age, albeit not in a systematic or legal way, gave encouragement to those Christians who wished to take precious items from temples: firstly as building materials, and secondly as plundered objects to keep or to sell on. During the reign of Constantine's sons, temples were attacked. According to Theodoret of Cyrus, a deacon from Heliopolis named Cyril was killed on the orders of Julian for

⁴² *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.24 (A.D. 423).

⁴³ Bonamente (1990); Barnes (1981) 247: Barnes notes that for the confiscation of the treasures, Constantine did not need to employ any force.

⁴⁴ Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 3.54.

having destroyed pagan statues.⁴⁵ Although this intentional destruction took place before Julian's reign, the ramifications of such an attack are echoed in a law from the Theodosian Code dating to A.D. 365, which prohibits a Christian being a temple custodian.⁴⁶ The correspondence of the emperor Julian suggests that certain temples suffered damage in the first half of the 4th c. This is reinforced by the fact that Julian gave an order in 362 to return to the temples that which had been taken from them, or to provide reimbursement for their losses. Bishops were not the only ones who had taken advantage of the closing of temples. Eminent people had not hesitated in pillaging temples or turning them into houses.⁴⁷ Theodoret, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, quotes the case of Bishop Mark of Arethousa, who had used building materials taken from a temple to construct a church.⁴⁸

It was probably by this method that some private and imperial collections of statues were formed. Numerous people took advantage of the abandonment of temples to create their own private hoards, at minimal expense. The majority of people who had access to famous works of art were from the upper classes, and it is clear that these Christians saw no harm in the statues. A member of the court of Theodosius II, at the beginning of the 5th c., started his own collection by sending for the statue of Zeus in Olympia, as well as a statue of Aphrodite in Knidos. This raises the issue of transportation. Was the public postal system used as E. Magnou Nortier suggests? Whatever the case, this practice was denounced by the emperor Honorius in 399.⁴⁹ The emperors themselves, up to the time of Justinian, still turned to temples and their statuary to embellish their cities.⁵⁰ Indeed, Constantinople of the 5th and 6th centuries was home to many groups of ancient statues, several of which certainly came from temples. When in A.D. 475 and 532, many monuments were destroyed by fire, such as the Baths of Zeuxippus, the loss of statues caused great sorrow.⁵¹ Thus, during the second half of the 4th and into the 5th c., the ruling class still enjoyed possessing statuary.

⁴⁵ Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.7.

⁴⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.1 (announced in Milan in A.D. 365).

⁴⁷ Julian. *Ep.* 60, 724, 763, 819, 1364.

⁴⁸ Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.3.

⁴⁹ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15; Magnou-Nortier (2002) 385, n. 2.

⁵⁰ Guberti Basset (1991).

⁵¹ Mango (1963).

The provincial elites similarly embellished their houses, as proven by the discovery of a group of statues discovered in south-west Gaul at Chiragan, as well as a collection found buried in a house close to Antioch.⁵² The villa at Chiragan contained more than a hundred sculptures, thirty of them being imperial portraits and twenty five other portraits. This was an exceptional collection, made up of heirlooms and statues, bought or brought from temples. Up to the 5th c., wealthy landowners enjoyed displaying statues in their atria or in their bath-houses. At this time, the production of statues had almost completely stopped, and landowners had to buy ancient statues if they wanted to adorn their house in the traditional way. The excavation of 4th c. and 5th c. houses reveals cultural continuity in the choice of domestic decor.⁵³ Mosaics with mythological motifs remained a favourite feature. In larger villas, statues of gods, emperors and family members still adorned reception rooms and gardens.

A later development saw the elimination of some decorative features during the 6th c. and 7th c.. While mosaics usually remained *in situ*, statues were often removed. Various hypotheses have been proposed to explain this change in decor, which resulted in the discarding or careful burial of statues. Possible explanations include a change of ownership, a generational change in taste, a greater awareness of the threat posed by statues to their owners, or a change in religion. When statues are discovered in good condition, scholars often propose that the owner was a crypto-pagan. If the statues were carefully disposed of, it may have meant that the owner valued them and was aware of their significance. Brinkerhoff suggested that the collection brought to light in Antioch had been put together to satisfy the religious needs of a family which had remained pagan. However, this collection was also composed of several imperial statues as well as those of the gods. Therefore, there is no way to be sure that this was a case of crypto-paganism, because as mentioned before, statues displayed the social status of the owner and provided a connection to the imperial government.

Cases of crypto-paganism are attested in the literary sources, but archaeological traces are rather difficult to define. For example, Zacharias Scholasticus tells us in the *Life of Severus*, of the discovery of a

⁵² Stirling (2008a); Brinkerhoff (1970); Stirling (2007).

⁵³ Bowersock (2006); Hannestad (2007).

secret sanctuary in Menouthis, not far from Alexandria.⁵⁴ The room used for sacrifices was hidden and filled with all sorts of idols. Thus, when archaeologists discovered a room filled with statues in the so-called House of the Statues at Carthage, they assumed they had found archaeological proof of the protective measures taken by devotees of the ancient deities against religious attacks from Christians. The statues were found in a sealed room, and as Quodvultdeus tells us, pagans hid their idols to protect them from attacks.⁵⁵ Yet, S. Anghel has recently shown that the deposit fits well within the tradition of votive statues being left in situ when a sanctuary ceased to function. In the late 4th c., a villa was built on top of this former sanctuary, which was probably dedicated to an Egyptian deity. The villa was not connected with the sanctuary, so the statues cannot be seen as examples of conflict between Christians and pagans.⁵⁶ This example teaches us to be prudent when analysing statuary deposits. Yet, it is easy to be misled because many statues ended up discarded and/or buried during the late antique period, especially during the 5th. to 7th c.⁵⁷ The fact that homeowners, when renovating their houses in the 5th and 6th c., often got rid of statues by throwing them into a well or pit, or by burying them under mosaics, is a sign of disaffection towards statuary of both a religious and secular nature.

In Athens, several statues were discovered carefully deposited at the bottom of three wells. One of the wells had been sealed following the renovation of the house above. It contained a portrait of Antoninus Pius, a statue of Hercules and two female statues. In another well there was a statue of Hermes, a head of Nemesis, and a small statue of a seated philosopher. In the third well heads of Helios, Nike and a bearded man were found.⁵⁸ Frantz linked these discoveries to the closing of a philosophical school and the subsequent departure of its philosophers, whose fondness for pagan culture and religion is well-attested in the written sources. It was, therefore, the departure and eventual change in ownership of the house that drove the philosophers to hide their cult statues. However, the identification of these houses as

⁵⁴ Zac. Myt. *V. Sev.* (PO 2: 27–32). On this episode, dated to the middle of the 5th c., see Wipscyska (1988); Haas (1997); Frankfurter (2008a).

⁵⁵ Quodvultdeus *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* (transl. R. Braun (Sources Chrétiennes 101) 566–69).

⁵⁶ Anghel (2009).

⁵⁷ Hannestad (1994); Brinkerhoff (1970); Stirling (1996).

⁵⁸ Frantz (1988) 41.

those of philosophers has been questioned, as the discovery of statues in a house cannot prove that it was inhabited by worshippers of the old gods or cults, or by philosophers.⁵⁹ The fact that the statues were not destroyed but had been deposited at the bottom of a well does not definitively indicate the religion of the people who decided to hide or discard them.

Nevertheless, there is one possible example, from Athens, of crypto-paganism. A large house, situated on the southern slope of the Acropolis, having been excavated, was found to correspond to the location given in a description by Marinus of Neapolis of a house inhabited by Proclus (A.D. 412–85), a Neoplatonic philosopher. The house contained a domestic shrine and many niches that had previously contained statues. It perhaps served as a clandestine place to practise sacrifices, as under the floor of one of the rooms were several statues of pagan divinities as well as an animal grave (a pig) surrounded by votive offerings, dating to the 5th c.⁶⁰ Evidence for a change in ownership and a probable change in religious preference, is provided in the deliberate removal of pagan items from one of the houses excavated near the Areopagus. Certain mosaics were reduced in size while a statue of Athena was dishonoured by being turned upside down and placed so that her feet rested on her head. Similarly, statues of Dionysus and nymphs decorating a bas-relief, were also decapitated. The consistent practice of burying a statue face down under a wall or threshold is testified on more than one occasion. Such a procedure had been used, for example, at the time of the conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias, towards the middle of the 5th c.⁶¹ One can see then that the total debasement of the statue was effected by treating it as a vanquished idol rather than as a piece of sculpture.⁶²

The excavations at Aphrodisias also revealed a house in which a similar scenario occurred. In this house, during the 5th c., a statue group representing philosophers decorated a space that perhaps served as a philosophical school. Having become inappropriate by the 6th c., the portraits of the philosophers had been broken off and suffered a fate no better than that of the debased cult statues from Athens. The marble effigies were brought to a small alleyway where they were discarded, only

⁵⁹ Sodini (1984) and (1997).

⁶⁰ Karivieri (1994).

⁶¹ Cormack (1990).

⁶² Chaniotis (2008).

after having been decapitated and broken into several pieces. Therefore, cult statues were not the only objects to undergo mutilation and destruction. In this particular case, the destruction can hardly be attributed to the statues possessing demonic strength, rather, more simply, their presence reminded people of pagan wisdom, and had become bothersome. The new occupants of the place doubtless wanted to get rid of these objects, which recalled the former function of the building.⁶³

The archaeological evidence for the destruction of statues is far from unambiguous. The statues overturned by numerous earthquakes or damaged by fire are found in a similar condition to those mutilated through religious zeal. Broken, buried and abandoned, they also appear to the archaeologist with broken limbs, and sometimes absent or damaged faces. The reasons for their pitiful state can sometimes be deduced from the context in which they are found. At Sardis, a statue of Dionysus was discovered in the basement of a wealthy Christian house, known as the House of the Bronzes. The statue, dating to the years A.D. 200–50, had a damaged face.⁶⁴ It was discovered in the basement of the slaves' quarters. Had it been placed there as scrap, after being mutilated, or was this an act of preservation? Indeed, the written sources tell us that pagans tried to shield cult statues from attacks and did hide them. The basements of some houses could be used as clandestine sanctuaries or as places of refuge for threatened or compromising religious objects. We can see here the difficulties associated with the interpretation of these objects. It often comes down to whether one thinks an object was either thrown out or just put in a safe place: that is to say, whether the cult statue was a victim of a physical attack or imperial legislation. Examples of buried statues around temples reveal the same variety of potential motives and interpretative difficulties as those associated with domestic statuary deposits.

BURIED STATUES

In Syria, a stele representing Ba'al was discovered buried on the site of Qadboun.⁶⁵ It belonged to a temple dating back to the 9th c. B.C.

⁶³ Smith (1990).

⁶⁴ Hanfman (1983) 192, 285 (note). On the circumstances of the find, see Hanfmann (1959) 27.

⁶⁵ Bounni (1997).

This stele and another one similar to it were still attached to the temple during its final phase. Situated at the summit of a mountain, this temple was not greatly affected by Christianity. Bounni concludes of the discovery:

If the stele really was buried, it was probably at the time of the closing of the temples, under the Emperor Theodosius. A section of the inhabitants that had converted to Christianity still believed in the miracles of Ba'al, especially those connected with a good harvest and the fight against drought.

The fact that the stele was intact could therefore be proof of the devotion of those who buried it. Alternatively it might represent fear for the harvest, as the rejection of a god might not alter his destructive powers. Indeed, the conversion to Christianity was not accompanied by any declaration that the gods did not exist. Rather they became demons, who preserved their power as evil spirits, ready to cause damage if they did not receive the recognition (and sacrifices) to which they were accustomed. It can also be argued that the burial of the statue indicated a will to eliminate the deity and to remove all of its strength. However, we could imagine a person in charge of a pagan temple, seeking to hide the bas-reliefs and steles representing the gods, from potential damage. These are the same items which are found mutilated in many other Syrian temples.⁶⁶ Therefore it is difficult to clearly gauge the motivations behind the buried stele from Qadboun: many interpretations are possible which are not mutually exclusive.

If the burial of effigies could be dated it would certainly help in their interpretation. Some caches of religious objects were buried not long before the sanctuaries which sheltered them were destroyed. In these cases one can legitimately argue that these burials demonstrated a desire to protect statues or cult objects. An example comes from a mithraeum in London and a rural sanctuary in the north of Italy, which were both destroyed in the 4th c.. There is another late 4th c. example at Carrawburgh, where statues, altars and dedicatory inscriptions were carefully deposited at the bottom of a well. The care with which these deposits were made leads one to think that they were placed there as a safeguard.⁶⁷ The threat that loomed over the sanctuary, whether it was religious or military, had not escaped those in

⁶⁶ Topoi 9.2 (1999).

⁶⁷ Watts (1998).

charge, or the devotees of the site, as this deposit clearly shows. The fact that the objects were never recovered does not tell us anything definitive as regards their fate, but suggests we may have to think more in terms of a military attack.

During the excavations at the Sanctuary of Pan at Caesarea Philippi, on the border of Palestine and Syria, a large collection of buried statues was discovered. The deposit contained 245 fragments from a group of 28 marble sculptures of divinities and mythological figures, all dating from the 1st c. A.D. to the 4th.⁶⁸ This very important sanctuary, dominating the city with its many temples, was abandoned towards the middle of the 5th c.. The statues were discovered in one of the sanctuary's halls, and on the street in front, within an archaeological layer corresponding to the Early Muslim period. The deposit was probably made up of the statuary which used to fill the sanctuary's temples. The statues were grouped together, perhaps shut away in the hall in order to adhere to the Theodosian legal obligation. Long after this, they were buried under rubble and soil. It is important to emphasise that this burial took place at a time after the era of conflict between pagans and Christians, as well as in a different context; it was a time when a cultural shift had occurred that affected not only public space, but also private and religious spaces. If this burial took place between the end of the 7th c. and the 9th c., it could be linked to iconoclasm. This development, observed in synagogues by Fine and in churches by Schick, was a period during which decorative elements that no longer corresponded to the norm were removed. Muslim influence is possible, as formerly acceptable decorative schemes, such as representations of Helios, signs of the zodiac, and animal figures, were rejected in favour of more aniconic patterns. The respect shown to the inscriptions, as well as to the marble statues in the temple, shows that their removal was carefully done. This corresponds therefore to a cultural change, where the presence of pagan statues was inappropriate, and their burial was the most simple and practical solution.⁶⁹

It is perhaps this final point that explains the burial of statues close to public spaces. A group of four statues was discovered not far from the *bouleuterion* in Aphrodisias. It contained honorific statues probably belonging to the same family who carried out religious acts, or who

⁶⁸ Friedland (1999).

⁶⁹ Fine (2000); Schick (1995).

were priests of Aphrodite. The statues were deliberately buried and the bases were perhaps used in the construction of the walls of Aphrodisias, around the middle of the 4th c.⁷⁰ The location of several pieces of the same statue in different places within the city may imply that the damage took place at speed at a time of emergency not long before the abandonment of the city, which may suggest another, later date, for the group's burial.⁷¹

The movement to reject and abandon statues, both divine and honorific, intensified between the end of the 5th c. and the 7th c. The ancient tradition of erecting statues to honour citizens or to show loyalty to an emperor had died out, despite Justinian's efforts to revive this tradition.⁷² The Christian opposition to statuary finally won out, and the 5th c. proved to be the turning point. As long as honorific statues continued to have a ceremonial role and represented an expensive but simple way to display political allegiance, the statues were preserved in frequented public spaces. These spaces formed the stage on which the imperial statues shone. But a law of A.D. 425 banned gestures of reverence towards imperial statues, and two other laws forbade the use of taxes to finance imperial statues. The irredeemable decline of statuary began at this time, which ultimately resulted in the out-and-out rejection of statues altogether. We can see an example of this at Scythopolis. When the Eastern Bath was abandoned in A.D. 515/16, the hypocaust was filled with statues. Cultic and imperial statues were thrown in together indiscriminately. Lots of fragments from statues of different sizes were also found, usually without a head. Other statues, including the bust of an emperor, were found under the floor of a new building on the site.⁷³ Under a room named after Silvanus, among other statues, a life-size sculpture of Dionysus was discovered, the eyes, nose and mouth of which had been mutilated before the statue was buried.

Intolerance towards ancient sculpture manifested itself in a more complex way than a simple hunt for idols. Some statues were mutilated to prevent the demon that inhabited them from acting, moving, seeing or speaking, illustrating just how effective negative Christian

⁷⁰ Hallett (1998).

⁷¹ Other examples of this at Aphrodisias, suggests this is a common occurrence: Hallett (1998) 82, n. 53.

⁷² Zuckerman (2002).

⁷³ Tsafirir and Foerster (1997) esp. 111; Tsafirir (1998).

rhetoric had been. However, many statues were buried which do not correspond to this pattern: often, statues were buried with care. There are numerous theories which attempt to explain this. New owners of property, displaying polite indifference, could merely have disposed of statues without destroying them. Similarly, a change in taste or fashions, or the desire by property owners to make their decor more fashionable, may explain the burial, in domestic and public settings, of entire collections of statues, both divine and imperial.

CONCLUSION

It is often assumed that statues were prized for their beauty in the late antique period partly because much value is placed on antiques in the modern world and partly because there is literary testimony which reveals that the upper classes of Late Antiquity enjoyed owning statuary. When archaeologists find a statue broken into pieces, they try to put it back together and offer it to the public as an artefact worthy of our admiration.⁷⁴ Many think that antique statues should be preserved in museums and it bothers us that other cultures may not wish to preserve objects from the past in a similar way.⁷⁵ But statues may have been perceived quite differently in the past. When the destruction and disposal of statues occurred during the late antique period, religious motivations spring to mind; Christian writers rejected idolatry and the act of sacrifice and invited their brethren to mock man-made objects which received offerings and sacrifices.⁷⁶ The Lives of the Saints are responsible for our understanding that destroying idols was an acceptable act, one which was imitated by Christians. By reading these sources, it is easy to conclude that zealous Christians could have had a hand in the destruction of statues, some of which have been recovered in wall foundations, pits and wells, as well as in other diverse locations.

But are we right in thinking that religious motivations were the main reason for getting rid of statues? As R. Coates-Stephens has demonstrated, many statues were broken into pieces for practical reasons.

⁷⁴ Gazda (1981).

⁷⁵ Flood (2002).

⁷⁶ Caseau (2007b).

They, along with other pieces of ornamental marble, were used in the foundations of walls.⁷⁷ Funerary busts, statues of gods and epitaphs ended up as rubble, whilst other statues were discovered embedded in fortified walls.⁷⁸ The construction of city walls in an emergency created the need for building material, and statue bases as well as statues were used. In Rome, at Aphrodisias, and also in many 6th c. African cities, statues were used as part of construction activities. This was a practical, money-saving gesture which resembles iconoclasm but it is not. It seems that the practice of building walls with bits of statues actually started in the 3rd c. and continued for at least two centuries, doing nothing to preserve statuary for future generations to admire.

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⁷⁷ Coates-Stephens (2007).

⁷⁸ James (1996).

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SACRED DEPOSITS

RELIGIOUS RITUALS AT SPRINGS IN THE LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY MEDIEVAL WORLD

Eberhard W. Sauer

Abstract

The extent to which spring veneration survived the Christianisation of the Roman Empire and that of its early medieval successor states has been the subject of much academic controversy. Scholars have mainly focused on information provided by ecclesiastical writers and medieval legislation. This study explores what contribution a systematic analysis of the archaeological evidence can make, notably coins. It takes into account a series of important discoveries, never discussed in this context before. At least up to the late 4th c., there is ample proof for widespread spring veneration within the Empire and beyond. However, changes to associated rituals, probably at least in part a result of the increasing scarcity of base metal coins and other popular non-organic offerings, make it more difficult to prove or disprove continuity of cult into the period after A.D. 400.

INTRODUCTION

...Gaudentius and Iovius, commissioners of Emperor Honorius, destroyed, as we know, on the 19th of March [A.D. 399] the temples of the false gods in the most famous and important city in Africa, Carthage, and smashed their idols. Who would not see how much the worship of the name of Christ has grown from then to our present time over nearly thirty years,...?¹

Augustine understood the significance of such actions: pagan architecture and images, once broken to pieces, were no longer capable of attracting religious veneration. Removing the very objects of veneration was instrumental in curing people from the error of idol worship and converting them to the one true faith of Christianity. The rationale behind such procedures makes perfect logical sense. Even if we disregard the widespread belief that smashing pagan images helped to dispel the associated demons, such destruction had a more dramatic effect than to remove artistic glamour from pagan cult. Having been

¹ August., *De civ. D.* 18.54.

the foci of local religious traditions for generations and sometimes centuries, venerable old images in a local temple were imbued with deep spiritual meaning and were, in a literal sense, irreplaceable—all the more so in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, when in most, and eventually all territories, pagan art was no longer produced or otherwise obtainable.

While destruction was a highly effective weapon against some forms of pagan cult, it was entirely ineffective against others. Any human creation could, with greater or lesser effort, be uncreated, but the objects of pagan veneration were not confined to the artificial: nature and natural phenomena were no less central to paganism than images and temples. While in many instances the veneration of natural features could involve images or sanctuaries, the destruction of such add-on elements did not normally suffice to root out cults centred on the forces of nature. With the exception of sacred trees, groves, animals or some geological features of small dimensions, natural phenomena were beyond the destructive capability of ancient technology. The only weapons against pagan veneration of springs, rivers, lakes, the sea, mountains, the sun, moon or astral phenomena, were attempts to persuade, threaten or coerce worshippers to desist from such 'superstition'. If unsuccessful, there was the option to nominally Christianise cult objects, whose annihilation was impossible or undesirable or both. Like other Christian writers of his age, St. Augustine had few objections to the destruction of what was sacred to his pagan contemporaries, to further the advancement of his religion.² Yet, he was conscious of the fact that such direct Christian action was futile and impossible against powerful natural phenomena: 'we certainly do not refuse to enjoy the light of the sun, because sacrilegious persons do not cease to make sacrifices to it wherever they can'.³

The question arises though, whether the eradication of nature worship may have been a lesser priority for Christian zealots. Did religious veneration of natural phenomena outlast image-centred forms of paganism—not because of their indestructibility, but because nature cults seemed less objectionable to Christians? Pagan images in Christian eyes were not just lifeless objects of shaped stone, metal or wood,

² For a discussion of St. Augustine's position on the destruction of pagan monuments, which was concerned with acting within the law, see also the article by Sears in this volume.

³ August. *Ep.* 47.4.

they were thought to be the seat of malignant demons.⁴ Their destruction robbed real forces of evil, and not just products of pagan fantasy, of their noble disguise and the platform from where they inflicted peril on human souls. These demons were also attracted to and benefited from bloody sacrifices. Indeed, it is sometimes argued, not without justification, that concerns about animal sacrifice strengthening the forces of darkness motivated the introduction of certain anti-pagan laws, rather than any attempt to eradicate offerings and rituals not stained with blood, or paganism *per se*.⁵ Yet, even if some Christians considered pagan cults that required bloody sacrifices as being more perilous than those which did not, or those that practised it less frequently such as spring worship, the removal of animal sacrifices and image worship did not make pagan cults acceptable in Christian eyes. Demons were thought also to inhabit natural features, such as watery places.⁶ In the 380s, Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, apparently did not consider spring worship a less harmful form of paganism than image veneration:

The following constitutes devil worship: a prayer in the temples of the idols, what is done to worship the soulless idols, lighting lamps or incense at springs or rivers; some, for instance, deceived by dreams or demons, have gone down to these [watery places], in the belief they will find a cure of their physical sufferings or the like.⁷

Christian condemnations of pagan spring veneration and associated rituals, however, continued for centuries, notwithstanding frequent announcements of punitive measures.⁸ It is a matter of academic debate how effective or ineffective such persistent Christian exhortations against various forms of nature worship in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages were, and whether we are dealing with evidence for a pervasive, unabating and uncontrollable 'problem' or a meaningless *topos* and stereotype in ecclesiastical literature. The latter view has most recently been expressed by Döring:

Even now the opinion, that the newly created Christian spring sanctuaries succeed pre-Christian cults or that existing Christian spring sanctuaries can be traced back to pre-Christian times, is still occasionally expressed...

⁴ Sauer (2003) 14, 64–69; Pekary (2002) 92, 139.

⁵ Turcan (1984) 209–20.

⁶ Spring worship: Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 3.13 on an animal sacrifice at a spring. Demons: Mart. Braca. *de corr. rust.* 8; Wetti *Vita Galli* 7; Walahfridus *Vita Galli* 7.

⁷ Cyr. Hierosol. *Catech.* 19.8. Cf. Yarnold (2000) 24–32.

⁸ Beck (1981) 12–14.

This theory is rooted in the romantic mythological tradition of the 19th century. In opposition to this view, we have to stress that there is no persuasive clue for the survival or revival of proven local pagan spring cults in Christian times... Furthermore, the textual sources of the Early and High Middle Ages, frequently quoted in this context, cannot support the theory of continuity. The prohibitions, in ecclesiastical regulations, of taking a vow at trees, springs, or rocks or Buchard of Worms' (*ca.* A.D. 965–1025) question during confession whether one had prayed, lit a candle or offered bread at a spring, do not reflect the contemporary reality of Germanic religious beliefs and practices. These records convey mostly late antique southern Gaulish superstition, which can be traced back to Caesarius of Arles. They reveal themselves to be formulaic ideas of pagan veneration of the elements, turned into *topoi* in the missionary and medieval period's critique of superstition.⁹

The impressive geographic spread of medieval written testimonies for such practices across Europe might, at first sight, support Döring's argument, but the more widespread evidence for spring veneration in modern folklore may rather weaken it. Even if it is indeed impossible for the vast majority of individual cases of modern spring- or well-cults to be proven to have medieval, let alone pre-medieval, origins, it is hard to believe that the thousands of holy wells or springs attested in recent centuries evolved *ex nihilo* and without any links to ancient tradition.¹⁰ This does not deny that spring cults have gone through numerous mutations, if there is a direct link, and that Döring is right that it is mostly impossible to prove or disprove continuity of place. However, is he also right in implying that references in ecclesiastical literature to specific rituals associated with spring worship are based on Caesarius of Arles, and that medieval authors from across Europe had no reliable information that such practices indeed occurred in their time and within their geographic spheres?

The purpose of this paper is not to list yet again late antique and medieval sources on spring veneration, nor to assess their veracity mainly or exclusively by textual analysis, but to explore how far material evidence contributes to the chronology of the phenomenon and to the question of continuity between ancient and medieval spring

⁹ Döring (2003) 13–14—my translation.

¹⁰ The extensive literature on modern well cults across the world goes far beyond the scope of this paper. For particularly interesting regional studies see Jones (1954); Blair (2005) 226, 375–80, 476–78, 481–82; Walsham (1999) especially 241–42; and Panzer (1941) 179–81.

vation.¹¹ It will also try to assess if archaeology has the capacity to prove the phenomenon—and whether or not the absence of archaeological proof of spring veneration at certain sites or in certain periods is proof of absence. Such an approach should eventually, of course, help to assess the reliability of the written sources.

SIMILARITIES IN PREHISTORIC AND MEDIEVAL SPRING VENERATION AND THE ROMAN ANOMALY

A wide range of watery features attracted religious offerings in Antiquity. These ranged from springs, with or without artificial catchment installations, wells and fountain basins to bogs, rivers, lakes and the sea.¹² Rock clefts or manmade shafts, whether reaching underneath the water table or not, could attract similar deposits. Differentiating between religious and profane deposits and/or the original function of such shafts is not always easy or straightforward,¹³ and the boundary between the sacred and the profane sphere was more fluid in Antiquity than tends to be the case today. Yet, there was little long-term continuity in the types of natural or artificial underground features attracting offerings, nor in the types of offerings they received. The European Bronze Age (and, to a lesser extent, Iron Age) is famous for the high number of metal artefacts, notably weapons, which found their way into rivers, so much so that there can be little doubt that a significant proportion of these represent intentional deposits.¹⁴ Hardly any, by contrast, occur in spring basins.¹⁵

In the European Iron Age, deposition in rivers continued with major fluctuations over time, whilst the number of springs yielding artefacts remained insignificant.¹⁶ Only after Rome's conquest of Gaul and parts of Germany and Britain do we witness artefact deposition in springs on an entirely unprecedented scale, in terms of the number of springs and the number and variety of objects involved. There is

¹¹ For compilations of sources see Beck (1981); Boudriot (1928) 34–35; Dowden (2000) 39–51.

¹² Sauer (2005) 95–116 with references.

¹³ Pauli (1986) 831–33; Suet. *Aug.* 57.1; Wieland (1999) 44–53.

¹⁴ Bradley (1998); Müller (2002) 127–48; Sperber (2006); Torbrügge (1972); Wegner (1995).

¹⁵ Seifert (2000).

¹⁶ Sauer (2005) 100–10.

no conclusive evidence to date, for example, that coins, even though widely circulated in the Late Iron Age, were deposited in the springs of north-western Europe prior to Rome's conquest. Thereafter they became the single most frequent type of object recovered from springs. The custom of tossing coins into springs, interestingly, appears to have spread to north-western Europe from the Mediterranean and is thus not a genuinely 'Celtic' or 'Germanic' practice as some earlier studies have suggested.¹⁷

While there are a small number of Iron Age deposits in lakes or springs and Bronze Age offerings in springs and wells, most alleged cases are based on misinterpreted or at least ambiguous evidence. For example, the rich late Iron Age artefact assemblage from Llyn Cerrig Bach on Anglesey was perhaps the result of a shipwreck rather than of ritual deposition in water.¹⁸ In Italy, by contrast, there are early examples for the custom of tossing coins into springs, such as at Vicarello near Rome (fig. 1).¹⁹ It was also in the Roman imperial period that the custom of depositing artefacts in or next to springs and wells did not only rapidly spread within the empire, but even beyond its frontiers into unconquered Germany²⁰ and, probably, Ireland.²¹ The deposition of votive gifts (including rings, beads and pottery vessels) in a watery context is also attested for Sassanian, and probably Parthian, Iran.²² Rivers have equally yielded substantial numbers of artefacts of various historic periods and while the existence of religiously motivated deposition of offerings in flowing water is not in doubt,²³ neither is the large-scale accidental loss of valuables during river crossings and inland navigation.²⁴ There is little hope that most individual items dredged from rivers can be differentiated securely between accidental losses and religious offerings.

¹⁷ From Mediterranean: Sauer (2005) 110–16. Earlier studies: E.g. Geschwendt (1972).

¹⁸ Deposits in lakes/springs: Sauer (2005) 95, 104–106. Springs and wells: Maraszek and Egold (2001). Llyn Cerrig Bach: Roberts (2002).

¹⁹ Panvini Rosati (1967–68). The Fountain of Anna Perenna at Rome appears to have been venerated since the 4th c. B.C., even if coin offerings only commence with issues of Augustus, perhaps as a result of earlier specimens having been cleaned out and reused at that time: Piranomonte (2010).

²⁰ Unconquered Germany: Teegen (1999) esp. 240, 255–57; Sauer (2005) 116.

²¹ Ireland: Kelly (2002); Daffy (2002); Kurzmann (2009).

²² Stöllner and Mir Eskanderi (2003).

²³ Sen. *Q.Nat.* 4A.2.7; cf. Oros. 5.16.5–6; Procop. *Goth.* 2.25.

²⁴ Künzl (1993); Sauer (2005) 96.

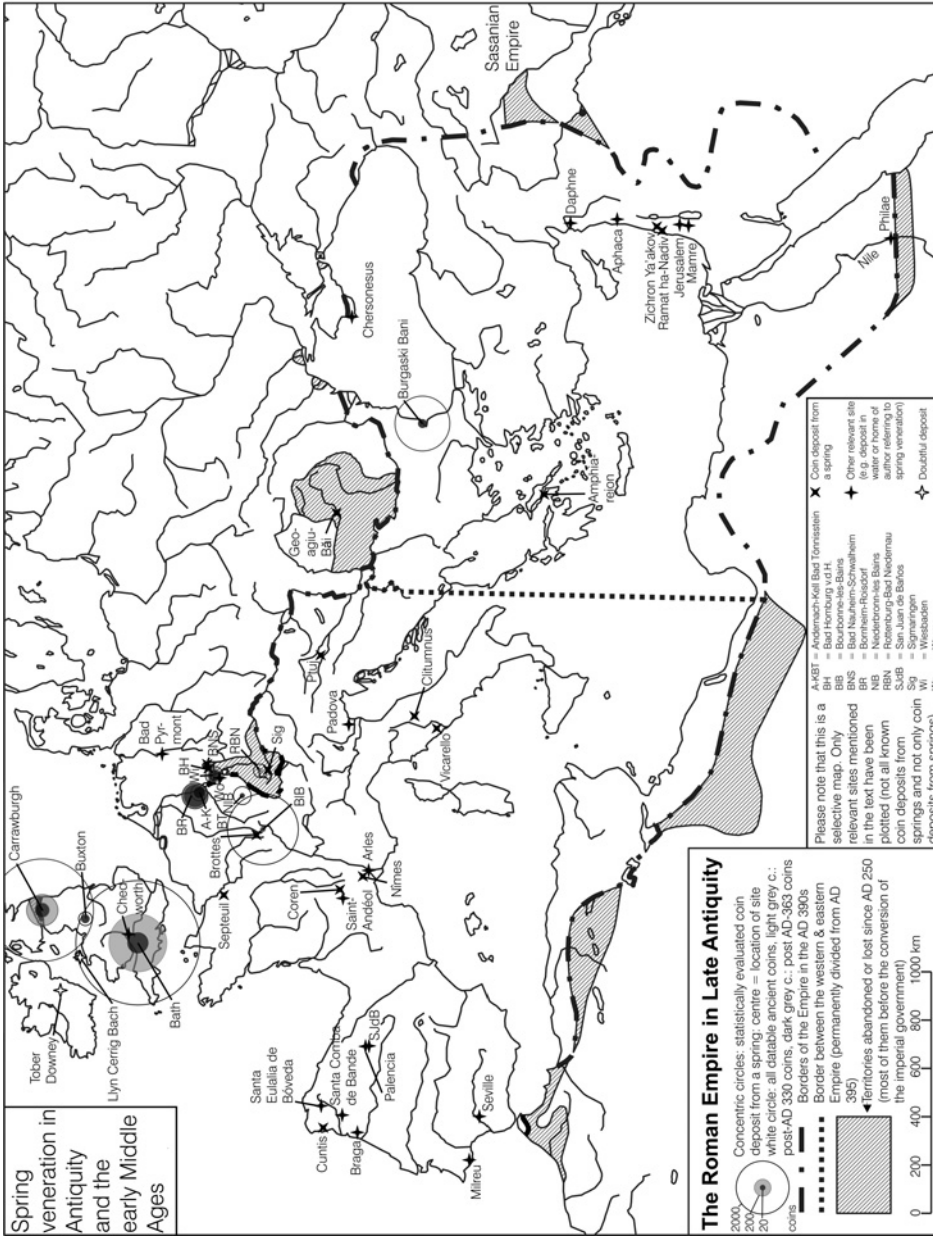


Fig. 1 Map of relevant sites.

Randsborg has argued persuasively—taking into account cases of post-medieval deposition of valuables in times of crisis—that deposits recovered from standing water also include items deliberately concealed for non-religious reasons.²⁵ The clustering of certain artefacts in some periods and in certain types of watery places can, however, often be more plausibly explained by ritual deposition than solely by profane hoarding or casual loss. As far as springs are concerned, especially hot springs, it would often have been very difficult to recover deposits. This observation and the token character of some offerings (such as Nemausus coins from the spring at Nemausus/Nîmes with an attached representation of a boar's or bovine leg as a symbolic substitute of an animal sacrifice)²⁶ are further arguments for ritual deposition as opposed to deliberately concealed hoards; and the high number of certain items, notably coins, recovered from some of the small water pools, similarly argues against accidental losses.

Beyond imperial frontiers, the bogs of northern Germany and southern Scandinavia continued to receive an astonishing number and variety of precious items during the Roman imperial period, as they had done in the pre-Roman Iron Age and Bronze Age. It is worth stressing that these offerings differ both in the dominant type of watery place receiving votive gifts (bogs in unconquered Germany as opposed to springs and rivers within the conquered regions) and the types of objects selected for deposition.²⁷ There is no space here to offer more than a basic summary of ritual deposition in rivers, bogs and springs in the two millennia between the Bronze Age and the Roman period, or even to attempt as much as a summary of religious activity associated with other natural places. Yet, even such a brief survey demonstrates powerfully the fluidity of religious customs in prehistory: religious phenomena, whether the erection of megalithic monuments or the deposition of metal artefacts in specific watery places, could dominate extensive geographic areas within Europe, only to be abandoned everywhere, or to be transformed beyond recognition, at a later stage.

These prehistoric analogies are worth bearing in mind when discussing the changing religious landscape at the transition between Roman paganism and medieval Christianity. Specific rituals disappeared from

²⁵ Randsborg (2002).

²⁶ Robieux (1972).

²⁷ Capelle (2003); Müller-Wille (1999); Pesch (2003).

wide parts of prehistoric Europe, or fundamentally changed, without any reason to assume that this resulted from the spread of a religion with an exclusive claim to the truth. It follows then that the shift from one type of votive offering to another, or the ceasing of deposition altogether at many springs in Late Antiquity, could well have occurred for reasons unrelated to the rise of Christianity and associated anti-pagan measures. The numerical decline of spring offerings between the Roman imperial period and the Early Middle Ages (discussed below) is no stronger evidence for a decline in paganism than the sharp rise in offerings from the Iron Age to the Roman imperial period is proof of Iron Age societies having been irreligious.

As an alternative theory to the hypothesis that pagan religiosity or spring veneration reached a peak in Roman imperial times, we will explore the possibility that the archaeologically traceable changes affected form more than substance. Does spring worship, or merely the deposition of artefacts made of non-perishable materials, peak under Roman rule? In the latter case—i.e. if the archaeological evidence for spring veneration in the Early Middle Ages is scarce, but no scarcer than for the Iron Age—should we conclude that spring veneration declined or merely that it reverted to ‘non-materialistic’ and archaeologically largely untraceable forms? The persistence of any form of ritual deposition beyond the time when Christianity is thought to have gained victory in an area is, in any case, significant in our context of course, as it is irreconcilable with a literal interpretation of the Bible.

MEDIEVAL DECLINE OR TRANSFORMATION OF SPRING WORSHIP?

The quantity of objects datable to the Early Middle Ages recovered from springs is minute in comparison with those dating to the Roman imperial period (see below). Amongst the finds recovered from the catchment installation of the hot spring at Bourbonne-les-Bains, the largest known assemblage from a spring in Gaul, there was just a single Early Medieval coin (of A.D. 839/845–52) (fig. 2) as opposed to 3,581 preserved Roman coins.²⁸ Even if we add a 6th c. brooch (as opposed to three brooches of imperial date), a Merovingian finger ring and a

²⁸ Sauer (2005) 17–18 tab. 1. This omits a lost coin, allegedly dating to the Merovingian period.



Fig. 2 Late coins from the hot spring at Bourbonne-les-Bains (from left to right): a copper alloy coin of Magnentius with large chi-rho symbol of A.D. 350–53, a gold *solidus* of Honorius minted at Milan between A.D. 394 and 402 and a silver *obol* of Pepin II of Aquitaine (A.D. 839/845–52).

Scale: 1:1. Source: Sauer (2005) 307–308.

4th to 7th c. clasp, the number of medieval objects known or thought to derive from the spring deposit amounts to no more than three, four or five.²⁹ A mineral spring at Bornheim-Roisdorf has yielded the largest ancient coin assemblage from any spring in Germany, that I know of. Amongst the 1,140 coins (including 478 identified and published specimens), there were just two mid-8th c. sceattas and a *denarius* of A.D. 711–37, plus 28, mainly or exclusively multi-coloured Frankish, glass beads.³⁰ In either case we observe a substantial decline in deposition in the post-Roman period. Yet, notwithstanding the small numbers, medieval artefacts still form part of some Continental spring deposits, whereas there appears to be little positive evidence from their British counterparts: Coventina's Well at Carrawburgh has, to my knowledge, not yielded a single Early Medieval artefact and Bath no more than one, even though each contained in excess of 10,000 Roman coins and a rich assemblage of other artefacts.³¹

²⁹ Brooch and finger ring: Sauer (2005) 168–69, 172 nos. 17, 28. Clasp: Grant and Sauer (2006) 630–31 with fig. 8.

³⁰ Dölger (1932a); Hagen (1932); Hagen (1933); Hagen (1959); Hagen (1976); Zedelius (1980).

³¹ Carrawburgh: Allason-Jones and McKay (1985). Cf. the smaller assemblage from the thermal springs at Buxton, which also lacks any Early Medieval objects: Hart (1981) 93–94. Bath: Cunliffe (1988); Gerrard (2007) and (2008).

In the case of Bourbonne, we are dealing with no more than, at most, one known artefact per century in the second half of the first millennium; in Roisdorf the quantity of finds from this period is scarcely more impressive, especially if we take into account that the beads,³² probably dating to the 6th or 7th c. A.D.,³³ need not have been offered one at a time, but, quite possibly, all at once if strung on a thread. It is worth noting that, while there is ample evidence for ritual deposition of dress accessories in Antiquity, the accidental loss of a finger ring, brooch or necklace whilst scooping up water is by no means beyond possibility. Even if we could be sure that all these artefacts were deliberate offerings as opposed to accidental losses, their number is so low that they scarcely allow us to conclude that their deposition proves local continuity of pagan ritual. Even allowing for incomplete recovery of the assemblages and the destruction of many artefacts in the hot salt-rich water at Bourbonne (as appears to have happened to many copper alloy coins), the number of Early Medieval artefacts is so low that we cannot be certain that by the time one object was offered anybody who remembered the last time this had happened was still alive.

The question must thus be asked, to what extent are we dealing: i) with offerings by foreigners familiar with the custom of depositing certain objects in springs from elsewhere; ii) unrelated and isolated intuitive acts; or iii) one person every 100 or 200 years, unfortunate enough to drop an item into a deep pool, when scooping up water? This question is even more difficult to answer when we are dealing with just one object found in association with a spring. How much or how little can we read into the discovery of a 9th c. ringed pin next to Tober Downey holy well in Ireland, three miles north-west of Tara, alongside finds of the 17th c., is anybody's guess.³⁴ That this Early Medieval metal object appears to have been found next to the well, rather than in it, adds further uncertainty to any interpretation.

The evidence suggests that the deliberate deposition of coins or other objects in springs in north-west Europe paled into insignificance

³² Beads: Hagen (1932) 327–28.

³³ Dating: Roth and Theune (1988) 30–32, tab. 5–6.

³⁴ Kelly (2002) 26–27.

after *ca.* A.D. 400. Yet, this observation need not be significant for the continuity, or lack of continuity, of spring veneration. Not only do numerous temples, such as mithraea, show the same pattern, but a similar decline in artefact loss or deposition occurs at non-religious sites occupied in the Early Middle Ages.³⁵ The mass production and distribution of base metal coinage north of the Alps largely ceased at the turn of the 4th–5th c. A.D.; the production of other closely datable objects made of non-perishable materials of comparatively low value declined similarly sharply. Whilst there is no question that coin deposition in springs in the late 4th to early 5th c. decreased dramatically, this is no proof that spring veneration *per se* declined or was successfully suppressed. Whether religious devotion to springs decreased or increased around A.D. 400, it was no longer possible to express it through offering these (now unobtainable) items. As discussed below, deposition continued well beyond A.D. 400 in territories where base metal coin supply lasted into the 5th or 6th c.

LATE ANTIQUE SPRING DEPOSITS: A MIRROR OF RELIGIOUS VIBRANCY AND DIVERSITY?

The Early to Late Roman period represents a distinct anomaly in comparison with prehistory or the Middle Ages in terms of artefact deposition in springs. As such, it is discussed here out of chronological sequence and in more detail, especially since the exceptional quantity of closely datable items, notably coins, then deposited in springs, allows us to reconstruct the fluctuating intensity of a specific cultic activity related to spring veneration with unusual chronological precision. A detailed survey of coin offerings in springs thus promises to provide fascinating insights into the dynamics of the ritual, notably in terms of potential Christian impact, and of regional differences. No attempt is made here to produce a list of all springs with evidence for the practice of coin offerings or other ritual deposition; instead I concentrate on a selection of well-published deposits.

Before evaluating coin curves from individual springs, we need to stress how chronologies rest on coin production rather than deposi-

³⁵ Sauer (2004).

tion dates. There is always an element of uncertainty involved when estimating how many coins were offered in a given time period, as the date of deposition always postdates the date of minting. Further, the speed at which different coin types in different periods disappear from circulation varies greatly: in periods of coinage reform or devaluation, old coinage tends to go out of use more rapidly than in periods of stability; direct supply of new coinage to a given area, or social group within the area, tends to result in a more rapid turnover of coinage, whereas lack of new coinage may extend the average circulation period. The bulk of coins deposited in springs are base metal coins (including, in the later 3rd and early 4th c., coins with a negligible silver content). Such copper alloy coins tend to vanish from circulation more rapidly than precious metal denominations.

Given the wide range of incalculable variables which influenced the circulation period of any piece of money, adding an arbitrary estimate for the circulation period to the known date or period of mintage for coins would be misleading. It is, however, self-evident that the deposition of a coin cannot pre-date its mintage and for the purpose of investigating the history of an essentially pagan practice during Christianisation such a firm *terminus post quem* can be highly relevant. Finally, it would be wrong to assume that the average time between mintage and deposition was excessively long: if, for example, in a spring in Germany coins minted between A.D. 348 and 363 are strongly represented, then we can be fairly confident that deposition reached a significant scale either during this period or no later than the A.D. 360s. Already under the Valentinianic dynasty (364–75/78) coins minted prior to 363 accounted only for a small proportion of the coinage in circulation.³⁶

At several springs, coin offering in Late Antiquity continued vigorously. While the intensity of deposition in springs varies no less prior to A.D. 260 than thereafter, for the purpose of this paper only developments from 260 onwards are detailed. The quarter-century from A.D. 260 to 285 is a good starting point as it comes well before any credible evidence for pro-Christian imperial policies. Furthermore, large numbers of coins were put in circulation then and neither scarcity of coinage nor repressive policies are likely to have curbed

³⁶ Stribny (1989) 413–14.

offerings in springs (though a possible decrease in population density in some regions as a result of the '3rd c. crisis' may have impacted adversely on offerings in the most affected areas). The periods prior to any major state-sponsored Christianisation (i.e. until *ca.* A.D. 330) form a valuable comparison to developments later in the 4th c.

Figures 3 to 5 show the intensity of coin offerings in springs which have yielded a representative sample of datable coins. For purposes of comparability, the number of datable coins of all periods has been increased or reduced to a total of 1,000, while keeping the relative proportion of each period unaltered. In order to reflect the different duration of periods the number then has been divided by the length of the period in years. For the period pre-260 the approximation is based on the number of coins minted prior to 260 and a rough estimate of the start date of deposition at any particular spring.

The chronology often differs sharply from deposits from other pagan sacred sites, such as Roman mithraea; the two are, incidentally, not mutually exclusive: coin offerings from springs in a 4th c. mithraic context are known from Septeuil and the second mithraeum at Ptuj.³⁷ All sizeable coin assemblages recovered from mithraea extend well into the second half of the 4th c. and invariably reach a peak in the 4th c.; coins pre-dating A.D. 260 account only for a small fraction of most large deposits.³⁸ By contrast, several coin assemblages recovered from springs reach a peak in deposition as early as the 1st or 2nd c. A.D., some even before the turn of the millennium, while offerings declined at some sites sharply prior to the 4th c. A.D. It is worth bearing in mind that the difficulty in recovering coins from a spring, especially a hot spring, will have contributed to the stronger representation of early coins in some examples than one would normally expect compared to a religious or profane site in the vicinity on dry land; Early Roman coins circulating at the latter sort of sites had a much higher chance of being spent or melted down, rather than being left behind, thus often leading to a bias towards later coins. Furthermore, the absence of mithraea predating the late 1st c. A.D. in the western empire is likely to account in part for the scarcity of early coins. Nevertheless, not one of the numerous mithraea abandoned by or before the

³⁷ Septeuil: Foucray (1987). Ptuj: Abramić (1925) 67–68.

³⁸ Sauer (2004).

3rd c. has, to my knowledge, yielded more than 13 coins, while 19 certain or probable mithraea, abandoned in the later 4th or 5th c., have yielded more than 50, and five of them more than 500.³⁹ There is thus currently no positive evidence for coin deposition in mithraea on any significant scale prior to the later Roman period, while there is evidence in the case of for several springs.

Patterns of deposition varied widely. In some springs, such as Brottes or Coren in Gaul, coin deposition ceased before the end of the 2nd c. A.D.⁴⁰ From the mineral spring at Coren, 149 Roman coins have been recovered, 80 of them datable (a large-enough sample to render it unlikely that the absence of late coins is coincidental), ranging from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius.⁴¹ This may to some extent be the result of a reduction in coin supply to Gaul from the reign of Commodus to the mid-3rd c. and the cult not surviving locally beyond A.D. 260, when an abundance of low-value coins again became available.⁴² In other springs offerings continue, but on a much-reduced scale. Examples include Bourbonne-les-Bains, where, after a distinct peak in offerings under Augustus, a second smaller peak was reached in the mid-2nd c., followed by a gradual decrease until deposition came to a temporary standstill with an issue of A.D. 229.

Offerings recommenced later, but the total number of preserved and identified coins deposited between the late 3rd and the late 4th or early 5th c. amounts to merely 16 specimens (as opposed to some 3,194 offered under Augustus and some 214 between the 1st and early 3rd c. and 158 not precisely datable post-Augustan coins (fig. 3)). This small sample, however, includes a gold *solidus* of the emperor Honorius (fig. 2) and there is little doubt that these are offerings rather than losses.⁴³ Potentially the marked numerical decline in offerings at Bourbonne and at various other sacred sites in eastern Gaul is linked to the severe repercussions of the '3rd c. crisis' and a possible decrease in population in some areas in the hinterland, which probably, unlike strategically important frontier zones, were not resettled to the same

³⁹ Sauer (2004) 344–48.

⁴⁰ Brottes: Thévenard (1996) 143.

⁴¹ Boudet (1889).

⁴² Hollard (1996) 211–12.

⁴³ Sauer (2005) 17–18 tab.1, 84 tab. 17, 306–307.

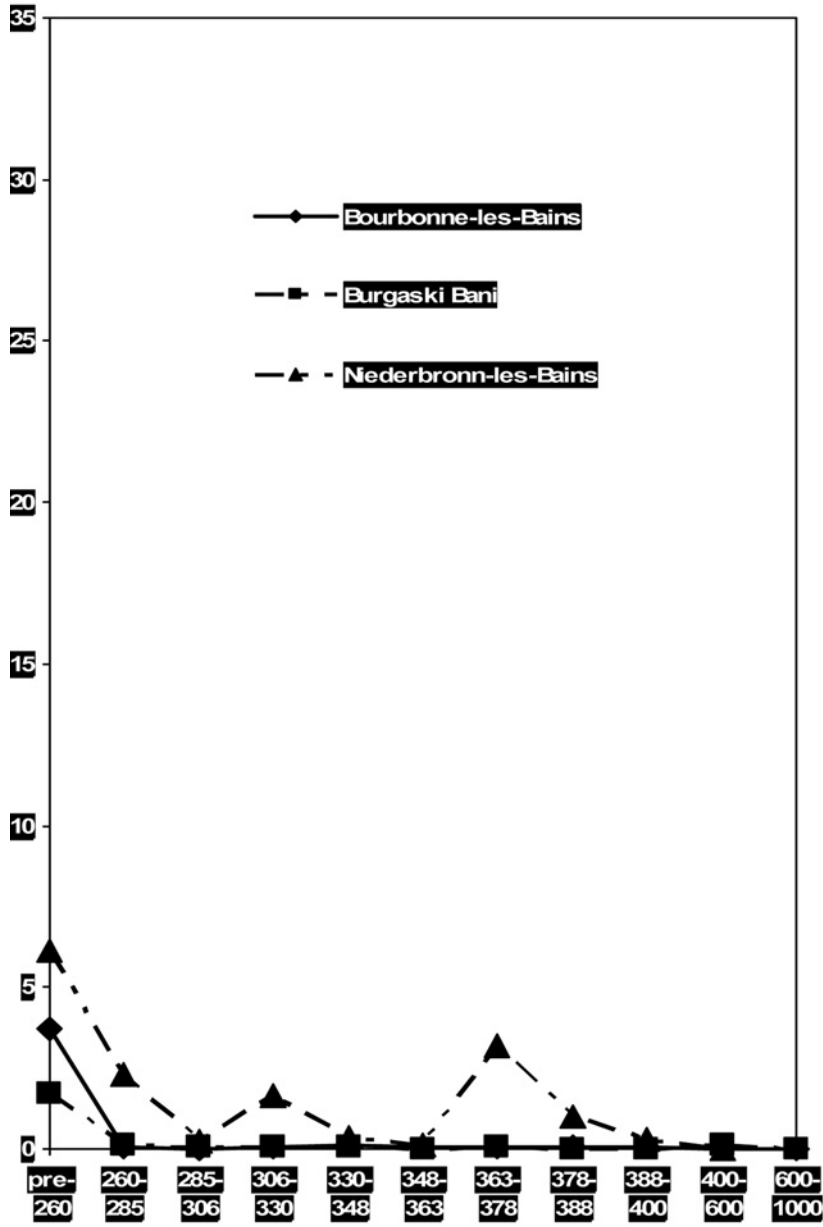


Fig. 3 Coin offerings (per year/1,000) in springs in the Continental hinterland.
Sources: see table.

extent.⁴⁴ A slight decline in coin offerings in the Late Roman period is also noticeable at Niederbronn-les-Bains (fig. 3), if nowhere near as sharp as at Bourbonne. However, as there were some 70 unidentified coins from Niederbronn, and our knowledge of the coin series is based on a 16th c. report (albeit one astonishingly diligent and detailed for its time), it is possible that fewer of the mostly small Late Roman coins were identified as opposed to the mostly large Early to High Imperial ones.⁴⁵ If there was a minor reduction in coin deposition at Niederbronn, it most likely reflects the declining fortunes of the spa than the ritual of coin deposition.⁴⁶ Yet, the practice continued until the late 4th or early 5th c., the latest issue being of the emperor Arcadius (A.D. 383–408). Elsewhere (see below) coin deposition in springs continued on a more impressive scale.

At Bath, assuming coin deposition commenced around A.D. 60, the average number of coins offered per year for significant parts of the 4th c. compares favourably with previous centuries (fig. 4). A 4th c. peak is reached between A.D. 330 and 348; only around 363 does deposition fall below the pre-A.D. 260 average, and only after 378 substantially below this. Admittedly, the average weight of 4th c. base metal coins was substantially below that of the 1st to early 3rd centuries (and the proportion of precious metal coins did not increase); the metal value of the offerings thus appears to have declined. However, assuming that one coin was offered per dedicator and that the gesture mattered more than the monetary value, the practice continued unabated. Coin offerings in Coventina's Well at Carrawburgh declined faster than at Bath (fig. 4), presumably because the custom did not develop a momentum on its own as strong as at Bath, and because Early to High Imperial coinage generally tends to be more strongly represented on Hadrian's Wall (whose garrison received regular pay) than in southern Britain. The extreme level of variability is demonstrated by the third British spring deposit from Buxton: with 132 dated coins (out of a total of 232), it is far smaller than those from Bath and Coventina's Well, but the sample is large enough to render it extremely unlikely that the

⁴⁴ Sauer (2005) 57–58.

⁴⁵ RöBlin (1593).

⁴⁶ Cf. Prévost-Bouré and Gérold (2002).

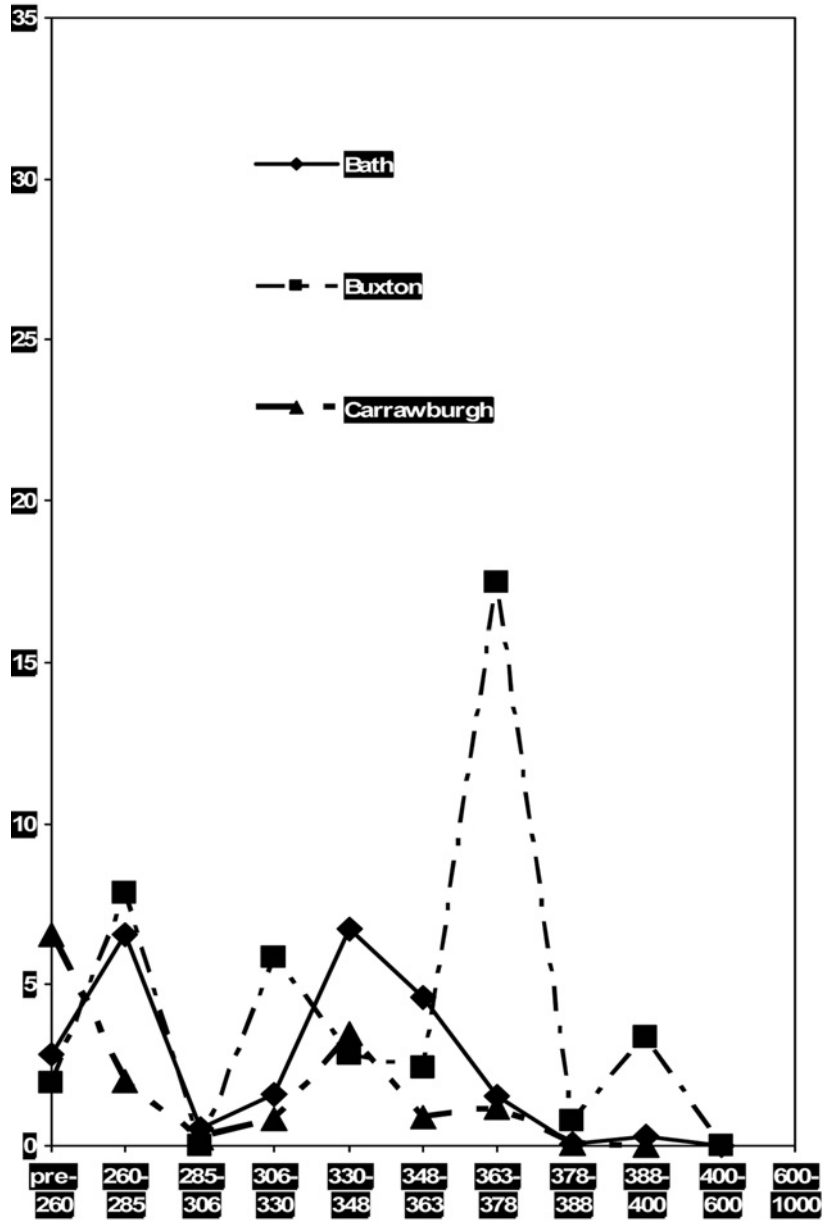


Fig. 4 Coin offerings (per year/1,000) in springs in Britain. Sources: see table.

obvious peak in the Valentinianic period (A.D. 364–78) is coincidental (fig. 4).⁴⁷

In Roman Germany, in the spring of Andernach-Kell Bad Tönnisstein, coin deposition in the Valentinianic period reached an intensity similar to Buxton (fig. 5). Bornheim-Roisdorf near Bonn, the largest ancient coin assemblage from a spring in Germany known to me, reached an even more distinct peak in Valentinianic times. Yet, unlike Buxton and Bad Tönnisstein, deposition continued vigorously whilst coinage remained in circulation: some 80% of the coins deposited here had been minted in the second half of the 4th c. (fig. 5). This explosive increase in offerings at such a late date demonstrates the vibrancy of local spring worship at a time when Christianity was, we assume, increasingly making inroads into the religious landscape of Roman Germany. While the Valentinianic period had been marked by religious tolerance, imperial policy in the last quarter of the 4th c. turned increasingly pro-Christian and anti-pagan.

The coin assemblage from the Schützenhofquelle at Wiesbaden (fig. 5), one of the late antique bridgeheads on the right bank of the Rhine, reached an even later peak than that at Roisdorf. The latest period of regular coin supply is exceptionally strongly represented at Wiesbaden: almost 40% of the 226 datable coins recovered from this hot spring had been minted after A.D. 388.⁴⁸ The presence of six or seven Nemausus issues, or halves thereof, a type which had largely disappeared from circulation as early as A.D. 9 in military assemblages, suggests strongly that coin deposition at this particular spring not only reached an unusually late peak, but, for a spring north of the Alps, also had started exceptionally early. The ratio of six or seven Nemausus issues to merely two Lugdunum Altar coins may even indicate that deposition at the Schützenhofquelle had started in the last decade of the 1st c. B.C. (though, in the light of the small number of Augustan coins, we cannot be certain that this ratio is necessarily representative of that amongst the original offerings).⁴⁹ While the overall number of 302 coins recovered from this particular 49°C hot spring seems unimpressive for some four centuries of deposition, the coins recovered perhaps constitute just a part of the original deposit. The sample

⁴⁷ Hart (1981) 93–94 with tab. 8b.

⁴⁸ FMRD 5.1,2. 1254.

⁴⁹ See Sauer (2005) 29–30, 87–90 (with fig. 27) 153 tab. 22a on dating Augustan coin assemblages on the basis of the ratio between Nemausus and Altar coins.

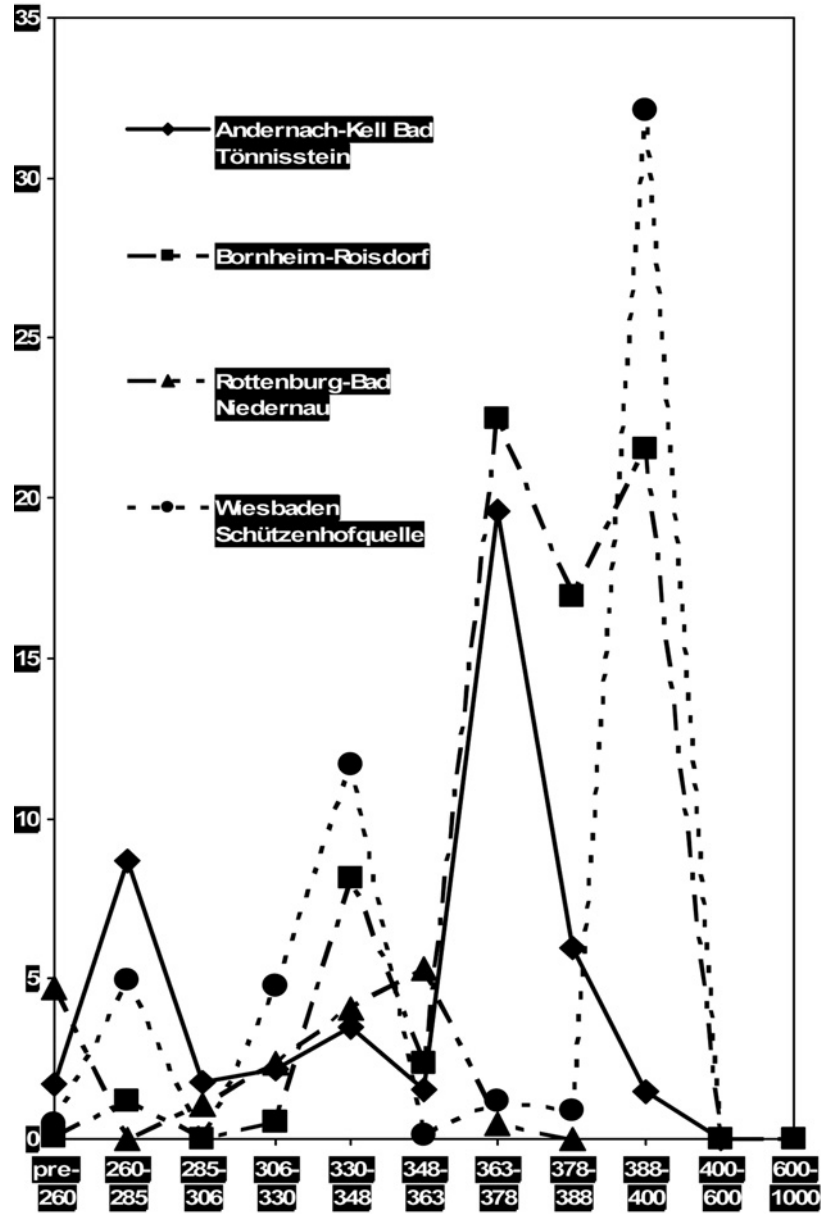


Fig. 5 Coin offerings (per year/1,000) in springs in Germany. Sources: see table.

is, however, certainly large enough to be statistically representative and, in the light of the normal lack of stratification of spring deposits as a result of water turbulence, it seems improbable that late coins form a high proportion of the votive assemblage for any reason other than that they were similarly strongly represented amongst the original offerings.⁵⁰

The proportion of late coins from the ritual deposit from the Schützenhofquelle is significantly stronger than amongst site finds from Wiesbaden (fig. 6), probably suggesting that this ritual practice developed a strong momentum of its own in the Late Roman spa town and continued vigorously as long as coins remained available.⁵¹ The latest coin, an incomplete silver *siliqua* of Constantine III of A.D. 408–11, affirms that coin deposition even continued into the early 5th c., despite the fact that copper alloy coin supply to the northern provinces had ceased and precious metal coins were otherwise not frequently offered.⁵² While being too small to allow detailed statistical analysis, we might add that Roman coins occur in two more of Wiesbaden's springs: 14 datable coins from the Adlerquelle ('Eagle's spring') span the period from A.D. 10/14 to 367/75, while four from the Kochbrunnen ('Boiling spring' or Schwanenquelle, 'Swans' spring'), both salt-rich and of 67°C heat, range from 7 B.C./A.D. 9 to 330/35.⁵³ Interestingly, offering of artefacts in association with springs in Roman Germany largely ceased at about the same time as in unconquered Germany: brooch deposition at the Brodelbrunnen at Bad Pyrmont came to an end some time between the late 4th and the mid-5th c. A.D.⁵⁴

Coin deposition in springs in the Late Roman period in Britain, Gaul and Germany exemplifies religious choice and pluralism. Not all such assemblages show evidence of continued ritual deposition beyond, or even until, the time when the Constantinian dynasty began to promote Christianity. In some, however, it trickled on, on an unimpressive scale, for several decades; in others it reached an unprecedented peak in the mid- or late 4th c., sometimes not ceasing until coins had generally disappeared from circulation. Behind these discrepancies

⁵⁰ Walker (1988) 281, 310.

⁵¹ FMRD 5.1.2. 1251, cf. 1247, 1250; Stribny (1989) 377 fig. 7.

⁵² FMRD 5.1.2. 1254.231; cf. *RIC* 10. 1532–36.

⁵³ Eagle's spring: FMRD 5.1.2. 1253. Kochbrunnen: FMRD 5.1.2. 1255. See also Czysz (1994) 59–60.

⁵⁴ Teegen (1999) 237–40.

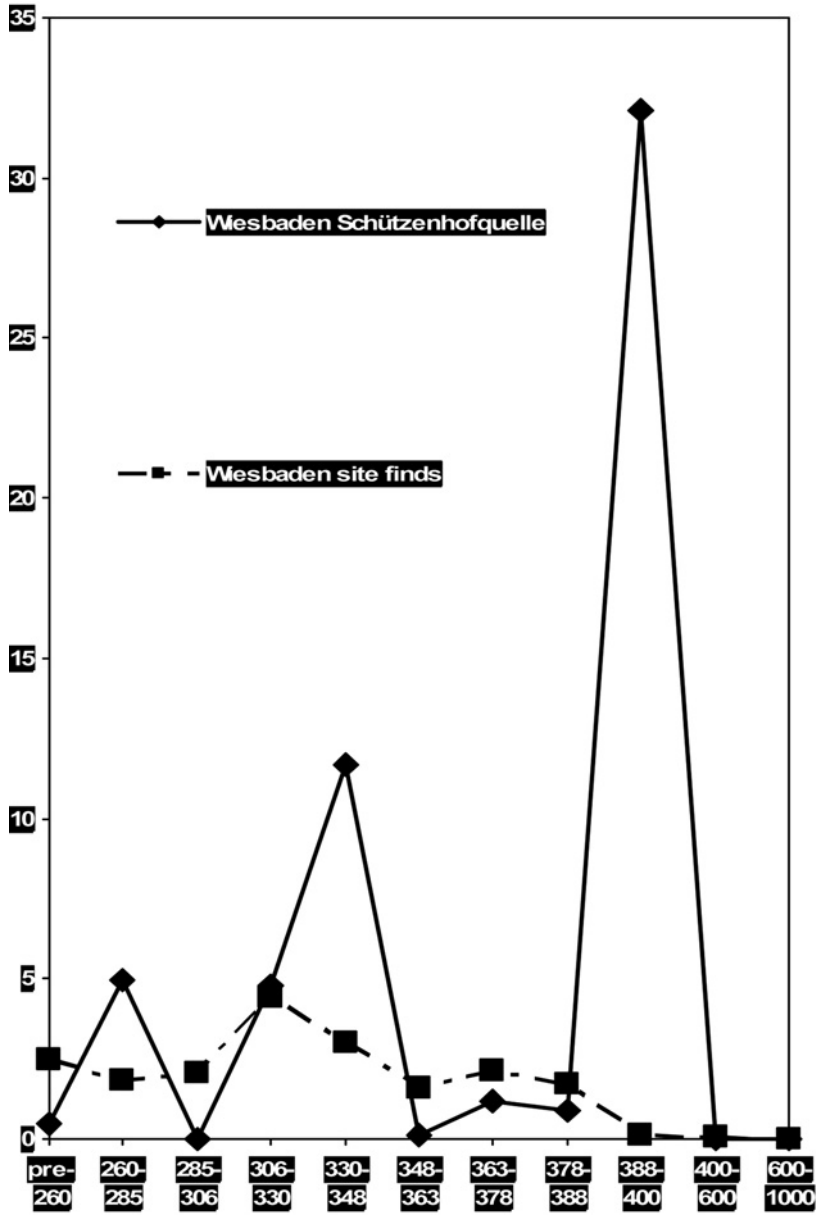


Fig. 6 Coin offerings (per year/1,000) in the Schützenhofquelle at Wiesbaden in comparison with site finds from Wiesbaden (coins offered per year/1000). Sources: see table.

there must have been local dynamisms, strong at some sites and weak at others, which elude us, although enough survives to demonstrate that this 'superstitious' ritual did not pale into insignificance or lose ground to Christianity in the 4th c., or at least not everywhere.

Whilst coin offerings in springs were practised also in many other parts of the ancient world, few detailed publications have appeared (or are known to me). One of the most remarkable cases is the 32°C hot mineral spring from a spa near the Black Sea in Thrace—with the telling name *Aquae Calidae* (Burgaski Bani)—still widely visited in Late Roman times.⁵⁵ The series of 2,146 identified coins (out of 2,914 specimens) starts exceptionally early and ends exceptionally late (fig. 3). Although there were merely five or six identified 4th c. coins, it is possible that 58 more are also Late Roman (unidentified and probably erroneously described as being from the beginning of the 4th c.). Coin offering seems to persist throughout the 5th and 6th centuries: there were four coins of Theodosius II (402–50), one of Marcian (450–57), two of Justin I (518–27) and ten of Justinian I (527–65), 30 unidentified coins of the 5th or 6th c. and even one coin of John I Zimisces (969–76).⁵⁶ A drain of a baptistery at Chersonesus on the Crimea peninsula equally yielded numerous coins of similarly late date (A.D. 364/75–582/602), probably attesting to a related custom in a distinctively Christianised context.⁵⁷ A spring at Ramat ha-Nadiv in Palestine, 6 km north-east of Caesarea, appears to have yielded coins mainly of the 4th to 6th c., the latest dating to A.D. 641/68.⁵⁸ Also highly significant is the discovery of "more than 2,000 Byzantine coins dating from the 4th to 6th c. A.D.", apparently associated with jewellery, in a spring near Zichron Ya'akov in Palestine.⁵⁹

Differences in coin supply may account for the longer survival of the practice of coin deposition in springs in the East Roman empire, but we await more detailed publications before any in-depth analysis is possible. That the spring cult in the Near East continued to flourish into the 6th c., if not beyond, may also be supported by the report that the Persian king Khusrav I made an offering to the local nymphs at Daphne near Antioch, famous for its plentiful springs, during his

⁵⁵ Hoddinott (1975) 221, 317; cf. Zahariade (2000).

⁵⁶ Filow (1911) 349–57.

⁵⁷ Dölger (1932b).

⁵⁸ Barkai (1997); cf. Hirschfeld (1995) 43.

⁵⁹ Anon. (1995).

invasion of 540.⁶⁰ While of considerable interest for the geographical spread of the cult, from the westernmost to the easternmost fringes of the Roman Empire, there is no space here to list or discuss springs from which only a small number of coins have been identified. They include, for example, a deposit of about 500 coins from the 59°C hot spring at Cuntis, in north-west Spain, extending until at least Constantine II (317–40) and, as only very few pieces were identified, quite possibly beyond.⁶¹

THE MOST ENDURING FORM OF CULT?

The rise of Christianity brought about one of the most fundamental changes to religion in Antiquity. Yet, an even more fundamental change within a much shorter period of time—at least in terms of archaeologically traceable forms of religion—occurred on a local level at an earlier date. Around A.D. 260, Rome, then hard-pressed by hostile incursions from its northern and eastern neighbours and by civil wars, notably between Gallienus and Postumus' Gallic Empire, withdrew from the territories between the Rhine, the Danube and the 'Limes'. The land was taken over by the tribal confederation of the Alamanni. To what extent repeated enemy incursions and the final withdrawal of the military garrison here caused a population displacement is not entirely clear, but there seems little doubt that significant proportions did leave. Whilst we will never know the number of immigrants and the number of people who stayed behind, the new masters of the land were in every respect the dominant force. Unlike the Ostrogoths in Italy or the Vandals in North Africa later, the Alamanni probably formed a much more substantial presence and transformed the culture beyond recognition, with construction in stone mostly abandoned, even if occasionally settlement continued in the area of old Roman stone buildings.⁶²

In terms of religious life, not one of the numerous temples found in south-west Germany can, to my knowledge, be shown to have persisted as a religious site beyond A.D. 260. And yet one type of sacred site

⁶⁰ Procop. *Pers.* 2.11.

⁶¹ Díez de Velasco (1985) 70–71, 85.

⁶² E.g. Reuter (2003) 63–81, 105–106, 108.

was seemingly unaffected by the politico-military transition, namely the veneration of sacred springs, manifested still by the deposition of coinage. The best-documented example is one of the mineral springs containing carbon dioxide at Rottenburg-Bad Niedernau, from which some 300 Roman coins were recovered, ranging from issues of Nero, minted in A.D. 65 and 67, to Valens (364–78) (fig. 5) or even Valentinian II (375–92).⁶³ While the number of coins and their locations leave little doubt about the religious nature of this assemblage, this interpretation gains further strength in the light of their association with other typical offerings, such as beads, rings and brooches, and the presence of an Apollo relief from the spring.⁶⁴ Being located over 70 km beyond the frontiers of the Late Roman empire, the late offerings were uncontestedly made by local people. One is inclined to assume that these were part of the relic Roman population and their descendents, even if it is not inconceivable that the dedicators included Alamanni. Since there was no tradition of artefact deposition in springs in unconquered Germany where the Alamanni had come from, if any Alamanni were amongst the dedicants, they most probably adopted the custom from those familiar with the pre-A.D. 260 traditions. That the population of south-west Germany received a reasonably abundant supply of coinage even after 260 and well into the 4th c. has been shown by Stribrny.⁶⁵

There are of course some ritual deposits in association with springs from unconquered Germany, the best-known being the Brodelbrunnen ('bubbling well'), a spring with carbonated water at Bad Pyrmont.⁶⁶ But these deposits only sporadically included coins, and offerings tended to be deposited next to, rather than in, the springs.⁶⁷ It seems highly unlikely that at Niedernau, where coins were offered fairly continuously from the later 1st c. A.D. to the 240s or beyond, the Alamanni would have conceived the idea of depositing coins in the spring here: they would have had no knowledge of local traditions, other than through contact with natives, and the habit of depositing artefacts, such as brooches, next to springs, attested for unconquered Germany,

⁶³ Nero to Valens: FMRD 2.3.3313; cf. Jaumann (1837) 209–10; Jaumann (1840) 100–101, 237, 251–54; Planck (2005); Riecke (1840) 212–13; cf. *RIC*, 2nd edn. Nero 312–13 (= *RIC*, 1st edn. Nero 318) and *RIC*, 2nd edn. Nero 605–606 (= *RIC*, 1st edn. Nero 329). Valentinian II: Paret (1938) 114 no. 111.

⁶⁴ Jaumann (1840) 100–101, 192–93, 228, pl. 15.1.

⁶⁵ Stribrny (1989) esp. 394–96.

⁶⁶ Teegen (1999).

⁶⁷ Sauer (2005) 116.

represents a different tradition. We must not overlook the fact that there appears to be approximately a half-century gap between the offering of a *sestertius* of Gordian III of A.D. 241 and three Tetrarchic *nummi* of 294–305 (the latter not normally circulating long because of the rapid reduction of weight and metal content of *nummi*), but such a gap could easily have been bridged by local memory. Further, it is perfectly possible that one or more of the unidentified coins or any non-recovered pieces date to the intervening period.

Niedernau is only *ca.* 4 km from one of the largest former Roman towns in the area, Rottenburg, an obvious place for a relic population; Late Roman coins are well-represented amongst the site finds here.⁶⁸ While coin supply to the town seems to continue throughout the second half of the 3rd c., there may have been a break in coin deposition in the nearby spring for a few decades in the mid- to second half of this century. When it recommenced, it constantly increased in volume until peaking shortly after the mid-4th c. While the sample is small, it is noticeable that this development is not mirrored in the coin supply to Rottenburg, which saw a decrease as coin deposition in the nearby spring increased (A.D. 306/30–348/63) (fig. 7)—possibly a sign for the religious custom gaining a momentum of its own until the declining coin supply in the final third of the 4th c. brought both the monetary economy and religious coin deposition to a halt.

Rottenburg is not an isolated example. Some 200 Late Roman coins were retrieved from a spring at the Brenzkofer Berg at Sigmaringen in 1842, also outside the Late Roman state, but no records of the composition of the coin series survive.⁶⁹ Two more springs in the Wetterau, within territory abandoned by Rome *ca.* A.D. 260, have yielded evidence for the practice of coin offering in the 4th c.: one *nummus* of A.D. 308–17 was retrieved from the Sauerbrunnen at Bad Nauheim-Schwalheim and a rare *siliqua* of 347/48 in the Elisabethenbrunnen at Bad Homburg v.d.H., as well as unidentified 4th c. coinage.⁷⁰ Notwithstanding the possibly small numbers involved, these coins, from springs with a Roman tradition of coin offering, surely represent votive gifts and not casual losses. Rottenburg-Bad Niedernau and, probably,

⁶⁸ FMRD 2.3.3317; 2.3 (Nachtrag 1) 3317 E1; cf. Kortüm (1998) 28–29 with fig. 46.

⁶⁹ FMRD 2.3.3262.4ff; Paret (1932) 178, 375.

⁷⁰ Bad Nauheim-Schwalheim: FMRD 5.2,1. 2159.41. Bad Homburg: FMRD 5.1,1. 1138; Jacobi (1897) 63 no. 79.

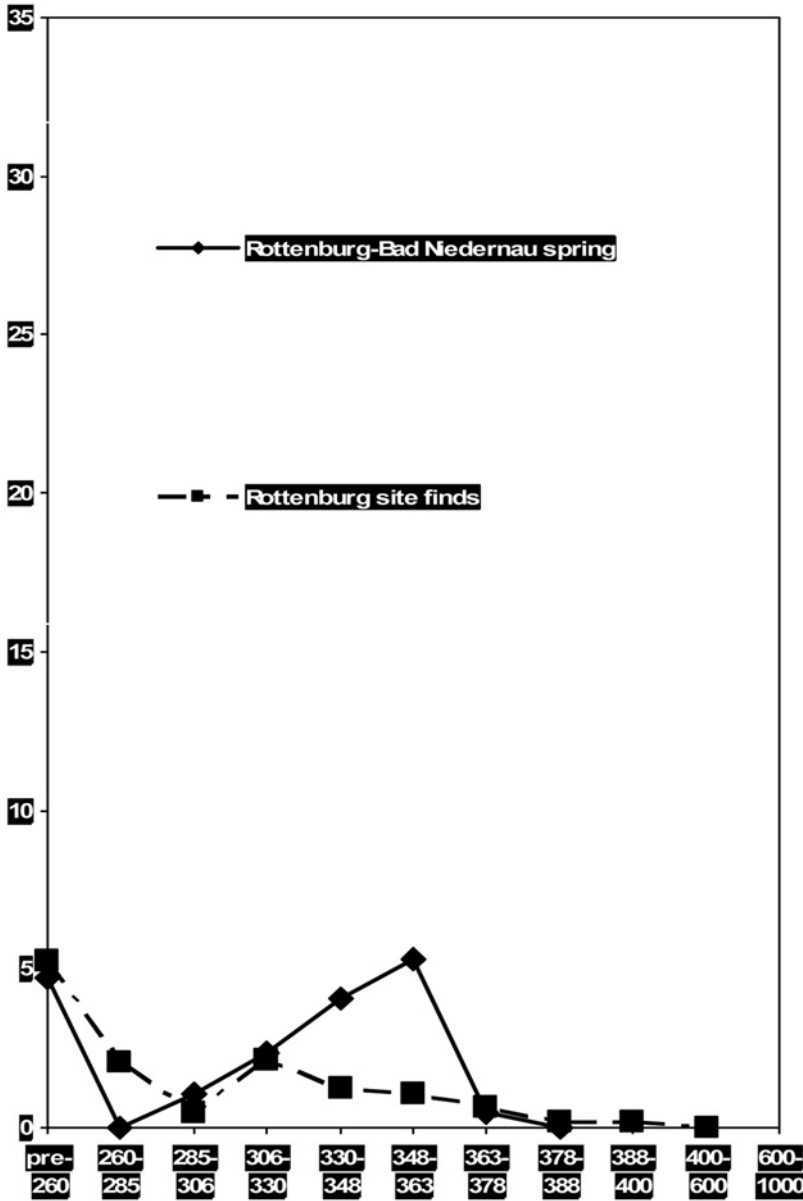


Fig. 7 Coin offerings (per year/1,000) from the spring at Rottenburg-Bad Niedernau in comparison with site finds from nearby Rottenburg (coins offered per year/1000). Sources: see table.

the Brenzkofer Berg at Sigmaringen, reveal that this form of nature veneration was capable of surviving the most profound political, religious and cultural changes. While classical, Gallo-Roman or Oriental deities cannot be shown to have retained any devotees, or their temples in the 'Limes' area any religious visitors, beyond A.D. 260 spring veneration and coin offerings survived for more than a century.

Whether the eventual end of coin deposition in springs marks a decline in religious devotion or, more probably, the increasing unavailability of low-denomination coinage, is open to debate. The production of other closely datable artefacts suitable as offerings sharply declined as well in Late Antiquity. Already before, few springs (and none in the 'Limes' area) received more than a trifling number of other tightly datable objects as offerings. The chronology of traceable ritual activity at springs is therefore often exclusively based on coins. Irrespective of whether or not untraceable rituals and beliefs, such as prayers, expressions of religious reverence or fear, religious performances, offerings or libations of organic substances, survived into post-Roman south-west Germany, it remains striking that no religious site other than springs attracted coin offerings beyond the loss of Roman rule. Coin deposition in south-west Germany's numerous temples, such as its *mithraea*, would be just as easy to prove as in springs, yet, in sharp contrast to adjacent parts of the Late Roman empire, it was not practised.⁷¹

It would be interesting to examine whether this continuity of spring cult beyond the end of Roman rule is paralleled by developments in Dacia, abandoned under Aurelian (270–75), i.e. not much later than the German 'Limes' area. A water pool filled with hot spring water at Geoagiu-Băi (Germisara) in Dacia may have the potential to answer this question (even if just for a single site): excavations in 1987 yielded over 600 Roman bronze and silver coins, although we lack any published information on their dates.⁷² Nothing suggests that any of the associated golden votive plaques postdate the end of Roman rule—unsurprising as the decline of the epigraphic habit across the Empire during the '3rd c. crisis' affected votive inscriptions particularly severely

⁷¹ Sauer (2004) 328, 336.

⁷² Pescaru and Rusu-Pescaru (1995–96) 326. Cf. Bordea and Mitrea (1989) 263 no. 37; Petrov (1988–91); Piso and Rusu (1990) 9.

(though some curse tablets from the King's Spring at Bath are almost certainly 4th c.).⁷³

While continuity is not always as easy to prove, as in the case of 4th c. Bad Niedernau, it is unlikely that the persistence of spring veneration in south-west Germany is a unique phenomenon. It would be going too far here to examine the abundant evidence for the veneration of springs all over Christian Europe and, probably to a lesser extent, the Islamic World in more recent times. Yet, one remarkable example for religious continuity in association with a spring is worth noting: Mangho-Peer, the shrine of a 13th c. saint and healing spa in the suburbs of Karachi, lies at the site of hot springs; marsh crocodiles are kept and fed with meat in a pool of spring water. Even if the origins and precise age of this pilgrimage site are hard to trace, one is inclined to agree with Mahdihassan who posits that this animal and spring cult may well go back to pre-Islamic times.⁷⁴ The survival of rituals associated with spring veneration in the increasingly Christianised Roman empire and its successor states, in pagan post-Roman south-west Germany and probably also in the Islamic world all lead to the same conclusion: the veneration of springs and other natural features may well have had a greater capacity to survive the most profound cultural and religious changes than most other religious phenomena of ancient origins.

CONTINUITY OF SPRING WORSHIP: OTHER MATERIAL TRACES AND CONCLUSIONS

Artefact deposition, as we have seen, declined sharply at the turn of the 4th to 5th centuries. The difficulty in proving or disproving that particular springs continued to enjoy religious veneration beyond this period is compounded by other cultural changes affecting the archaeological visibility of nature worship. Unlike the High Empire before, or from the Late Middle Ages onwards after, in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages sacred springs were not normally incorporated into temples or churches or marked by such monuments, religious

⁷³ Votive plaques: Piso and Rusu (1990); Rusu (1994). Bath curse tablets: Tomlin (1988).

⁷⁴ Mahdihassan (1973); cf. Burton (1877) 91–106.

art or inscriptions nearby. Despite the scarcity of such 'monumental' evidence for continued spring worship, it is not entirely absent. A link back to the Early Middle Ages is provided by Visigothic churches in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula built in the immediate vicinity of, or even incorporating, springs, such as Palencia cathedral, San Juan de Baños and Santa Comba de Bande (fig. 8).⁷⁵ Santa Eulalia de Bóveda (fig. 9), a 4th or 5th c. spring sanctuary with Late Roman paintings, possibly transformed into a church, with a second, 12th c. church built on top of it (fig. 10), provides continuity to the present.⁷⁶ In the south of the Peninsula the late antique reuse of springs for ecclesiastical purposes is reported by Isidore of Seville,⁷⁷ and the reuse of a water sanctuary as a church is shown archaeologically for Milreu.⁷⁸ Material evidence for the Christianisation of spring and water cults is seen in Britain also, notably in a 4th c. apsidal pagan shrine in Chedworth villa, where three chi-rho symbols had been incised in the rim slabs of the octagonal spring basin (fig. 11), found reused elsewhere in the villa.⁷⁹ At the Clitumnus spring in Italy an Early Christian chapel, resembling a classical temple, was built of *spolia*.⁸⁰

Finds from springs prove that artefacts continued to be deposited in Late Antiquity, and they suggest strongly that spring veneration continued into the Middle Ages and beyond. Unlike in the Roman imperial period, it no longer involved regular deposition of metal artefacts, although at least some of the medieval objects recovered from springs are likely to represent offerings; the casual loss of scarce Early Medieval artefacts in small water pools, especially of objects unlikely to be dropped accidentally when scooping up water, seems an improbable model to explain their occurrence in a series of spring deposits. That Early Medieval spring veneration no longer involved deposition of numerous artefacts is perfectly consistent with the written sources,

⁷⁵ Collins (1998) 220, 232–35, 241–42; Collins (2004) 186, 191; Rollan Ortiz (1970) 49–55, pls. 34–36.

⁷⁶ The first church is disputed: see Abad Casal (1982) 147–52, Collins (1998) 242–43 and Schlunk (1981) 277–79 with further literature; Hauschild (1993).

⁷⁷ Isid. *Etym.* 15.4; cf. Arnold (1894) 178.

⁷⁸ Arbeiter (1998); Schlunk and Hauschild (1978) 9, 111–12; Hauschild and Teichner (2002) 48–57.

⁷⁹ Goodburn (1979) 24, 28, pl. 11.

⁸⁰ Iorio (1998) 60–61, 63.

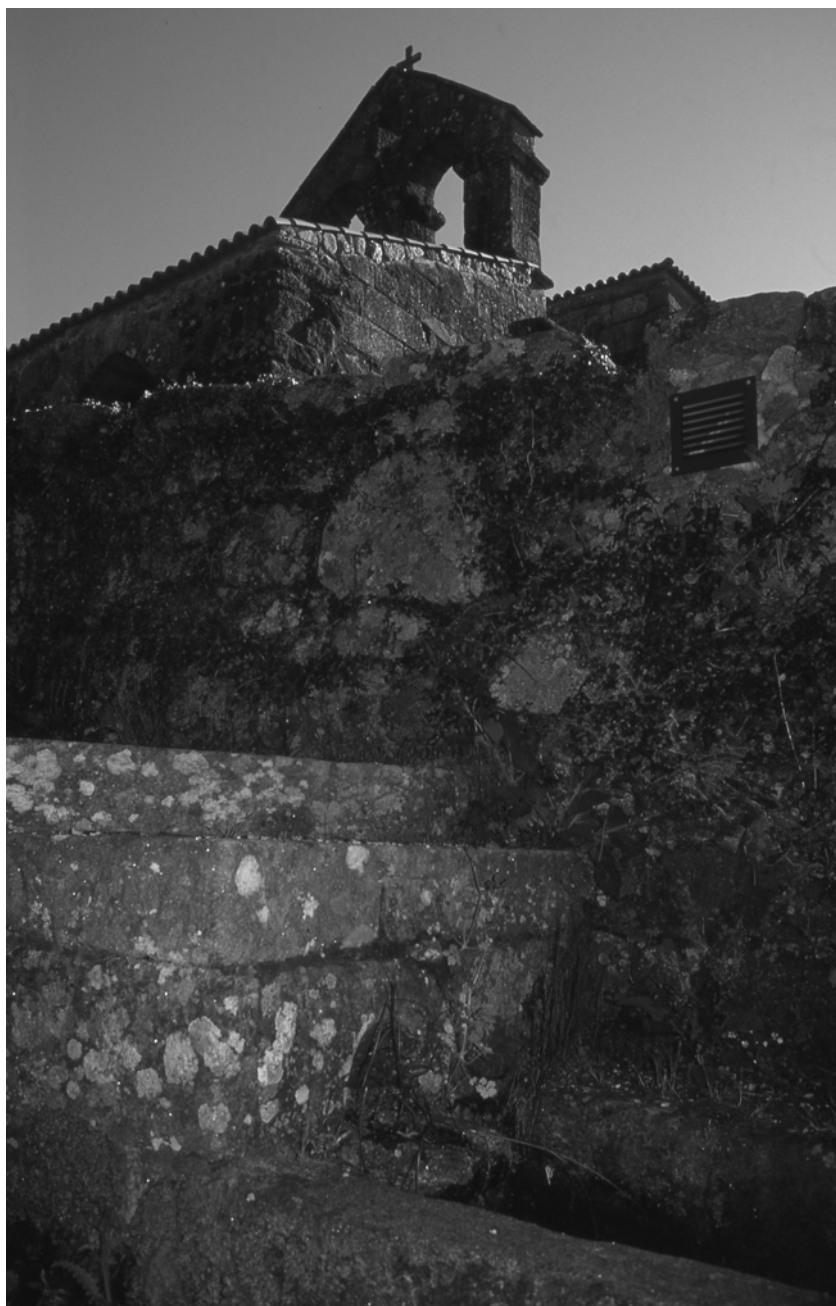


Fig. 8 The spring next to the Visigothic church of Santa Comba de Bande.



Fig. 9 The late antique spring sanctuary of Santa Eulalia de Bóveda with the central basin in the foreground, supplied with water by a nearby spring.



Fig. 10 The parish church over the entrance to the spring sanctuary of Santa Eulalia de Bóveda.



Fig. 11 Chi-rho symbols were incised in the rim (reused in antiquity and no longer in place) of the octagonal spring basin in a pagan shrine at Chedworth Roman villa.

which frequently just refer to prayers, divination or other unspecified forms of pagan cult at springs.⁸¹

Before the abandonment of large-scale coin deposition in water, the practice did not entirely escape the notice of Christians: the list of 4th c. offerings deposited in a holy spring at Mambre near Hebron in Palestine provided by Sozomen, for example, refers to wine libations, sacrificial cakes, coins, unguents and incense; near the spring, votaries placed burning lamps or other portable lights.⁸² The latter practice is, as we have seen, also attested by Jerusalem's bishop Cyril for the same century and roughly the same geographic area. Of all these votive gifts, only the coins are archaeologically visible (and have indeed been found in the spring described by Sozomen and, as discussed above, in other late antique springs in Palestine).

Further archaeological evidence for the veracity of Sozomen's account is provided by a concentration of clay oil lamps around the spring at Mambre.⁸³ They need not represent more than a small part of the lights once burning near the holy spring, as many more lamps may have been removed once extinguished, and any portable lights made with organic materials would be untraceable, even if left behind. The discovery of the head of a statue of Dionysus and of application-decorated pottery bowls from the fill of the catchment installation of the spring is worth noting. The bowls are thought to have been used for mixing wine and water, partially on the basis of their findspot and the attested libations.⁸⁴ Whether they represent circumstantial archaeological evidence for wine consumption or libations, or whether this could be a circular argument (little more than the written evidence forms the basis for this informed guess on the function of this vessel type) is open to debate. Even if the bowls at Mambre and an amphora stopper from the King's Spring at Bath are exceptions to prove the rule, libations or other offerings of liquids or perishable food are not normally archaeologically provable.⁸⁵

It is notable that Caesarius, bishop of Arles from A.D. 502 to 542 battled against people praying and discharging vows at springs,

⁸¹ Beck (1981) 12–13.

⁸² Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 2.4.

⁸³ Mader (1957b) 107, 151, 164, 177–78, 180, 296–97; Mader (1957a) pls. 55–56; Kofsky (1998) 24–26.

⁸⁴ Taxel (2007) 182–83, cf. 176–77; Belayche (2001) 96–99.

⁸⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 5, cf. 360–61; Henig (1988).

archaeologically untraceable pagan practices. He lived at a time when base metal coins were no longer widely available in his area of influence.⁸⁶ Martin of Braga, writing in the west of the Iberian Peninsula, also in the 6th c., condemns the lighting of candles (*cereoli*) next to springs and the throwing of bread into such water sources.⁸⁷ Both candles and bread would have vanished. The offerings deposited in the lake of Saint-Andéol near Marchastel, attested by Gregory of Tours, equally appear to have been confined to foodstuffs and other organic materials, such as textiles.⁸⁸

While there is no space here to scrutinise all relevant sources referring to spring veneration, the impression remains that most rituals referred to by the medieval Church fathers and other contemporary sources would not have left any traces. Döring's hypothesis (cited above), in part based on Daxelmüller, that later authors follow Caesarius without being aware if spring veneration still took place in reality in their own time (even if they provide more detail on such pagan practices than the Gallic bishop, or even if the range of rituals mentioned goes beyond those mentioned by him), has to be evaluated in the light of the archaeological unprovability of the pagan rituals mentioned.⁸⁹ Absence or scarcity of archaeological evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence or scarcity of pagan spring cult in the Middle Ages. This is, of course, not to deny that ecclesiastical writers, when arguing against such pagan practices, were indeed sometimes influenced by earlier writers, or occasionally copied from them, such as Pirminius from Martin of Braga.⁹⁰ Yet, that there was, by and large, a single geographical and chronological origin for Early and High Medieval references to spring worship, as Döring claims without providing any evidence, seems improbable in the extreme.⁹¹

One possible case for an archaeologically traceable ritual deposit of natural products next to a spring are aurochs horn cores, found in the Roman bath-house and near the Roman catchment installation of the hot spring at Bourbonne-les-Bains. Radiocarbon dates suggest

⁸⁶ Caesarius *Serm.* 13.5, 14.4, 53.1, 54.5, 229.2, 229.4.

⁸⁷ Mart. Braca. *de corr. rust.* 16.

⁸⁸ Gregory of Tours *De Gloria Confessorum* 2; cf. Fabrié (1989) 30, 101–102 no. 96.

⁸⁹ Döring (2003) 13–14. Daxelmüller (1997) 2063; cf. Boudriot (1928) 34–35.

⁹⁰ Influence of earlier writers: Cf. Meaney (1984) 129 on Ælfric; Pirminius: *PL* 89, 1041; Mart. Braca. *de corr. rust.* 16; cf. Boudriot (1928) 34; Simonetti (1992).

⁹¹ Döring (2003) 13–14. Cf. Spickermann (2003) 498–501.

that deposition commenced between the mid-3rd and 5th centuries, and ended in the 5th or 6th c. A.D. While we cannot exclude the possibility that the cores merely attest to late antique or Early Medieval horn-work being used to gather the natural hot water, or hot water being used to facilitate removing horn sheaths from horn cores, ritual deposition is a distinct possibility.⁹² We will probably search in vain for archaeological traces of most other natural votive gifts or practices, such as bread offerings or the lighting of candles, let alone prayers or vows, but this does not disprove that the Church fathers were telling the truth. Archaeology can only trace the exceptions to the rule at a time when spring worship appears to have been largely 'non-materialistic', but enough evidence survives to suggest that spring veneration indeed remained a significant phenomenon, and certainly so prior to the decline of coin supply around A.D. 400.

Medieval Church fathers fail to describe rituals which would be archaeologically provable; by contrast, authors of the imperial period referring to events up to A.D. 400 do repeatedly mention the deposition of coins and other items made of metal in springs (such as the Clitumnus spring and the spring of Aponus near modern Padova in Italy or the spring at the Amphiarcion in Greece, or at a spring at Mambre in Palestine) and other watery places (such as near Philae in the river Nile and a water pool at a temple at Aphaca between Byblos and Heliopolis).⁹³ If the medieval Church fathers and legislators were dealing with obsolete rituals copied from earlier sources (and demonstrably not just one), then it would be hard to explain why their alleged plagiarism was confined to practices which are archaeologically unprovable, while they fail to copy or refer to any which would have left material traces. This is hardly coincidental, and it surely demonstrates that some of the medieval descriptions of contemporary spring veneration did, most likely, have a core of truth.

⁹² Grant and Sauer (2006).

⁹³ Clitumnus: Plin., Ep. 8.8.2. Aponus: Suet. Tib. 14.3. Amphiarcion: Paus. 1.34.4. Palestine: Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 2.4. Nile: Sen. *Q.Nat.* 4A.2.7. Aphaca: Zos. 1.58; Nordigian (2005) 178–79.

TABLE OF COIN FINDS

Date of coins	pre- 260	260- 285	285- 306	306- 330	330-348	348-363	363- 378	378- 388	388- 400	400- 600	600- 1000
Andernach-Kell	45.9	42.2	7.2	10.1	12.1	4.5	57.0	11.6	3.4	0.0	0.0
Bad Tönnisstein											
total											
%=Percentage	23.7	21.7	3.7	5.2	6.2	2.3	29.4	6.0	1.8	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	28.5	4.9	6.8	8.2	3.0	38.5	7.8	2.3	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	1.7	8.7	1.8	2.2	3.5	1.5	19.6	6.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
Bath total	6254.0	1798.6	129.4	417.0	1332.0	761.0	257.0	7.0	42.0	0.0	0.0
%=Percentage	56.9	16.4	1.2	3.8	12.1	6.9	2.3	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	37.9	2.7	8.8	28.1	16.0	5.4	0.1	0.9	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	2.9	6.5	0.6	1.6	6.7	4.6	1.6	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0
Bornheim-	2.0	14.0	0.0	6.0	70.0	17.0	161.3	81.0	123.7	0.0	3.0
Roisdorf total											
%=Percentage	0.4	2.9	0.0	1.3	14.6	3.6	33.7	16.9	25.9	0.0	0.6
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	3.0	0.0	1.3	14.8	3.6	34.1	17.1	26.2	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.5	8.1	2.4	22.5	16.9	21.6	0.0	0.0
Bourbonne-	3556.0	3.3	0.0	3.3	6.7	3.3	3.3	2.6	2.4	0.0	1.0
les-Bains total											
%=Percentage	99.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	13.3	0.0	13.3	26.7	13.3	13.3	10.4	9.6	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Burgaski Bani total	2084.0	7.0	2.0	1.6	1.3	0.1	2.0	0.0	0.0	47.0	1.0

Table (cont.)

Date of coins	pre- 260	260- 285	285- 306	306- 330	330-348	348-363	363- 378	378- 388	388- 400	400- 600	600- 1000
%=Percentage	97.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	50.0	14.3	11.6	9.0	0.8	14.3	0.0	0.0	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	1.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Buxton total	35.2	25.8	0.0	18.5	6.7	4.8	34.6	1.0	5.3	0.0	0.0
%=Percentage	26.6	19.6	0.0	14.0	5.1	3.7	26.2	0.8	4.0	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	26.7	0.0	19.1	6.9	5.0	35.8	1.1	5.5	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	2.0	7.8	0.0	5.8	2.8	2.4	17.5	0.8	3.4	0.0	0.0
Carrawburgh total	6212.0	378.0	40.0	144.0	465.0	96.0	133.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
%=Percentage	83.1	5.1	0.5	1.9	6.2	1.3	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	30.0	3.2	11.4	36.9	7.6	10.6	0.2	0.0	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	6.5	2.0	0.3	0.8	3.5	0.9	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Niederbronn-les-	189.0	13.0	1.0	9.0	1.5	0.5	11.0	2.3	0.8	0.0	0.0
Bains total											
%=Percentage	82.9	5.7	0.4	3.9	0.7	0.2	4.8	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	33.3	2.6	23.1	3.8	1.3	28.2	5.8	1.9	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	6.1	2.3	0.2	1.6	0.4	0.1	3.2	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Rothenburg-Bad	101.0	0.0	3.0	7.6	9.8	10.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Niedernau total											
%=Percentage	75.9	0.0	2.3	5.7	7.4	8.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% A.D. 260-400	n/a	0.0	9.4	23.6	30.6	33.3	3.1	0.0	0.0	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	4.7	0.0	1.1	2.4	4.1	5.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table (cont.)

Date of coins	pre- 260	260– 285	285– 306	306– 330	330–348	348–363	363– 378	378– 388	388– 400	400– 600	600– 1000
Wiesbaden Schütz- zenhofquelle total	30.0	28.0	0.0	26.0	47.5	0.5	4.0	2.0	87.0	1.0	0.0
%=Percentage	13.3	12.4	0.0	11.5	21.0	0.2	1.8	0.9	38.5	0.4	0.0
% A.D. 260–400	n/a	14.4	0.0	13.3	24.4	0.3	2.1	1.0	44.6	n/a	n/a
Coins per yr/1000	0.5	5.0	0.0	4.8	11.7	0.1	1.2	0.9	32.1	0.0	0.0

Commentary on Table: well-published larger coin deposits from springs. Uneven numbers result from coins not attributable to a specific minting period being split between periods. In the case of Bourbonne-les-Bains 226 coin halves have been counted towards the pre-A.D. 260 specimens, whilst it has been assumed that the 158 unidentified post-Augustan coins have an identical chronological distribution to the identified pieces of this period. The number of identifiable coins from each spring has been proportionally increased or reduced to 1,000. The share of each period has been divided by its length in years. If, for example at Buxton, 26.2% of coins date to the period from A.D. 363 to 378, then this equates to 262 coins out of 1,000. Divided by 15, this corresponds to *ca.* 17.5 coins per year. This plotting method (as opposed to comparing the absolute number or proportion of coins dating to a long with those dating to a short period) gives a good idea of the relative intensity of coin deposition in different periods. Note that the estimate of the coins offered per 1,000 per year prior to A.D. 260 is based on a rough estimate on the start of coin deposition at the site in question. Inevitably, peak periods and low intensity periods of deposition have to be interpreted in the light of the relative volume of coins of different periods circulating in the relevant region as much as in the light of religious history.

Sources: Andernach-Kell Bad Tönnsstein: Klein (1887); Bath: Walker (1988); Bornheim-Reisdorf: Hagen (1932); Hagen (1933); Hagen (1959); Hagen (1976); Zedelius (1980); Bourbonne-les-Bains: Sauer (2005); Burgaski Bani: Filow (1911) 349–57; Buxton: Hart (1981) 93–94 with tab. 8b; Carrawburgh: Allason-Jones and McKay (1985); Niederbronn-les-Bains: Rößlin (1593); Rottenburg-Bad Niedernau: FMRD 2.3. 3313 (cf. FMRD 2.3. 3317; 2.3 (Nachtrag 1) 3317 E1 for site finds from Rottenburg); Wiesbaden Schützenhofquelle: FMRD 5.1.2. 1254 (cf. FMRD 5.1.2. 1251 for site finds from Wiesbaden, excluding the area of the early fort).

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ABBREVIATIONS

FMRD = *Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Deutschland*.
 PL = *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Latina*, ed J.-P. Migne.
 RIC = *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (1st and 2nd edn.).

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WELLS AND BELIEF SYSTEMS
AT THE END OF ROMAN BRITAIN:
A CASE STUDY FROM ROMAN LONDON

James Gerrard

Abstract

The recent discovery of a large hoard of copper-alloy, pewter and iron vessels in a late 4th to early 5th c. well at Drapers' Gardens in the City of London highlights the role that wells and shafts played in late antique ritual life. Examination of the well's contents reveals that these 'pots and pans' were not hidden in a time of crisis but were carefully placed alongside ritually killed objects and a dismembered juvenile red deer in a complex ritual act. This paper undertakes a speculative exploration of this act's significance and its possible meaning.

INTRODUCTION

One of the defining characteristics of late antique society was the complexity of its belief systems.¹ It was a world in which centuries-old pagan traditions had become blended and inextricably intertwined; where polytheism vied with monotheism, and Christianity struggled to define itself against a plethora of 'heresies', philosophies and syncretic beliefs.²

It is not the intention of this paper to embark on a detailed study of the complexity of late antique paganism and religious beliefs. Nor does it seek to explore the use of wells and shafts in religious practice in the Late Roman empire. Instead, this article takes a remarkable discovery made on a developer-funded rescue excavation in the City of London, and attempts to reconstruct a symbolic narrative from the recovered artefacts and ecofacts. The result is a speculative interpretive essay that sheds light on the complexities of belief systems during Britain's last days as a diocese of the western empire.

¹ For instance, Brown (1971) 49–119 and Cameron (1993) 66–98.

² Momigliano (1963).

THE DRAPERS' GARDENS WELL

During 2007, a large plot of land known as Drapers' Gardens in the heart of the City of London's financial district underwent redevelopment. It had long been recognised that this part of the modern city overlay the infilled valley of a Thames tributary known as the Walbrook. This valley and stream system had been a prominent feature in the Roman city and earlier excavations nearby suggested that there was good potential for *in situ* Roman deposits to survive (Fig. 1). As the excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd progressed, it became apparent that a substantial stratigraphic sequence dating from the 1st c. A.D. through until the 3rd c. A.D. survived.³ However, later layers had been removed by 19th c. and later construction activity. The end of the Roman period was thus represented by only a handful of surviving features that had been cut into the underlying deposits. These features included a substantial revetted stream channel that ran alongside a Roman street, the timber foundation piles for Late Roman structures and two Late Roman wells.

In the bottom of one of these wells was a collection of twenty copper-alloy, lead-alloy and iron vessels, as well as a number of other objects. This 'hoard' is an unusual find and the largest collection of such material to be excavated in Britain under modern conditions.⁴ A full catalogue of the hoard's contents has been published elsewhere.⁵ However, it is worth noting that the collection included a large hanging basin with zoomorphic escutcheons, a large bucket, a so-called 'Westland' cauldron, two 'Hemmoor buckets', several dishes, bowls, skillets, a jug and a trivet (Fig. 2).

It became apparent very quickly that this large group of vessels must have been deposited towards the very end of London's existence as a Roman city. Coins were found securely stratified in the well's construction backfill (the material backfilled behind the well's timber lining to fill the pit or 'construction cut' dug to hold the lining). These suggest

³ Hawkins *et al.* (2007).

⁴ Kennett (1971) in the last review of the hoarding of bronze vessels in Britain discussed only seven such hoards. It is doubtful whether this number has increased much in the four decades that have followed that publication, and certainly no recent find has been of a comparable size to the Drapers' Gardens discovery. For some German and Italian hoards from wells see, for instance, Plank (1979) and Baldassari and Favilla (2004) 147.

⁵ Gerrard (2009).

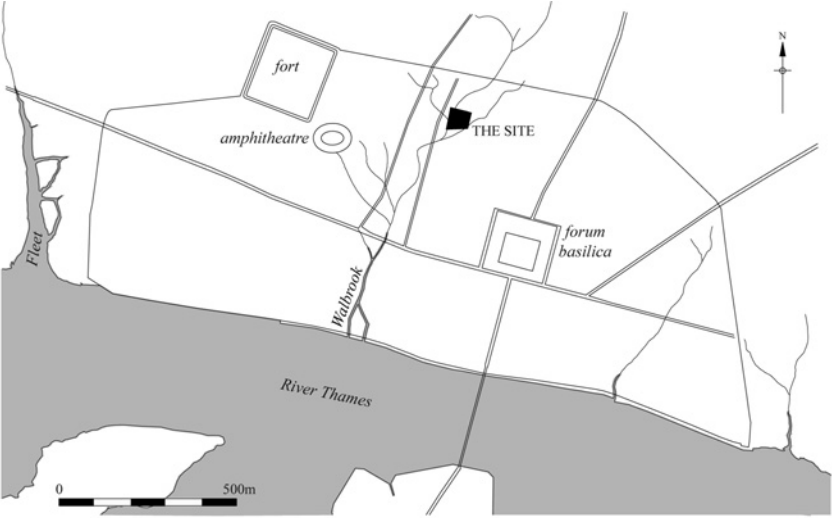


Fig. 1 Drapers' Gardens, the Walbrook Valley and Late Roman London's topography.



Fig. 2 The hoard under excavation.

that the well was not constructed until *ca.* A.D. 335 at the earliest, and associated pottery could be as late as *ca.* A.D. 350. Furthermore, two coins found securely stratified below the hoard are both unworn issues struck in the name of the Emperor Gratian and the latest of these was not minted until A.D. 375 at the earliest.⁶ Thus the hoard could not have been deposited until after A.D. 375.

Such a late date in Roman Britain's history immediately suggested a simplistic explanation of why the hoard had been placed at the bottom of this well, and it seemed easy to suggest that this 'hoard' had been hidden for safe-keeping during a period of political upheaval.⁷ Magnus Maximus' usurpation in A.D. 383, the events culminating in Constantine III's bid for the purple in A.D. 407 and 'barbarian' raiders all appeared to offer a reasonable explanation for the presence of these vessels.

The fallacy of such simplistic explanations were criticised almost twenty years ago by Reece, who was looking specifically at coin hoards.⁸ In an archaeological fable he called 'hearts and hedgehogs', Reece pointed out that it was impossible to know whether a hoard (of coins or any other objects) had not been recovered because its owner's heart had been ripped out by marauding barbarians, or because its owner had forgotten where the hoard had been concealed after an evening with a jar of potent mead and a bet on how far a hedgehog could crawl.⁹ Our inability (except in very specific circumstances) to associate finds of archaeological materials with historical events has led to the development of new approaches to hoards of Roman objects.¹⁰ Theoretical influences from the archaeologists engaged in studying prehistoric societies have also contributed to these new approaches.¹¹ The emphasis is now on the social practice and belief systems that underpinned the deposition of these hoards: they are now often seen as votive deposits or 'gifts to the gods', although such interpretations are not without their critics.¹²

⁶ Carson and Kent (1965) nos. 534 and 529.

⁷ Gelichi (2007) 375 reached a similar, simplistic conclusion for hoards in Italy before moving towards more complex interpretations.

⁸ Reece (1988).

⁹ Reece (1988) 266–67.

¹⁰ Finds and historical events: see for instance Frend (1992) and Reece's (1994) response. New approaches: Millett (1994), Poulton and Scott (1994).

¹¹ Hill (1995).

¹² Millett (1994); Johns (1994).

As the analysis of the well and its contents progressed, it became increasingly clear that the hoard's deposition had a ritual or votive aspect to it. The evidence for this was twofold. Firstly, two deliberately broken objects were found, above the coins of Gratian but below the hoard. Secondly, a highly unusual set of faunal remains was recovered from just above the hoard.

Of the two broken objects, the first was a find that might be expected from a well: an iron bucket binding. However, this iron strap showed clear evidence of having been broken and wrenched from the bucket and the absence of any other bucket elements in the well (such as staves or a handle) seems to point to a deliberate act rather than accidental damage. Presumably this binding is derived from the wooden bucket used to draw water from the well. Its deconstruction could be interpreted as a highly symbolic act in which the well's very functionality was destroyed, with the staves and other fittings being disposed of elsewhere. The second object was a copper-alloy bracelet of a well-known Late Roman type but seemingly purposefully bent into an 'S' shape. Such deliberately damaged objects are well-known from temple sites.¹³

An unusual group of faunal remains constitute the second element that led to the interpretation of this hoard as a ritual deposit. Recovered from just above the metal vessels were the partially-articulated remains of a juvenile red deer. Present were the right scapula, a humerus fragment, both radii and a right metacarpal as well as the right pelvis, the left and right femurs and tibias, the right astragalus and calcaneus, both metatarsals and a number of ribs. It was noticeable that no vertebrae or skull fragments were recovered and none of the bones exhibited any butchery marks. Comparison of the remains, and their state of fusion, with red deer skeletons, aged by tooth eruption, indicates that the animal was 4–5 months old at death.¹⁴

The interpretation of this partial deer skeleton as a ritual deposit rests on three complementary strands of argument. Firstly, deer bones of any description are incredibly rare in Roman period faunal assemblages, as Cool has recently noted.¹⁵ The faunal specialist who examined this animal's remains has twenty years' of experience of looking

¹³ For instance Woodward and Leach (1993) fig. 111.

¹⁴ Rielly (2008).

¹⁵ Cool (2006) 112–18.

at faunal assemblages from London and has never seen an example of a partially articulated deer skeleton from a well. Secondly, red deer are known from ritual contexts in London and beyond. In the city's eastern Roman cemetery, a pit was excavated that included a horse, a dog and a juvenile red deer, which were laid nose-to-tail in what has been interpreted as a reference to hunting.¹⁶ At Baldock (Hertfordshire), two partially articulated deer skeletons aged 4–5 months were recovered from the fill of a Late Roman well and these have been interpreted as ritual deposits.¹⁷ Finally, the absence of key skeletal elements is difficult to explain unless we are dealing with the deposition of butchered joints or a partial carcass. The lack of butchery marks cannot be taken as indicating that the animal was not butchered, because a skilled butcher would leave no marks.

RITUAL IN THE WALBROOK VALLEY

Our current understanding of the Walbrook Valley suggests that this wet area was not formally incorporated into *Londinium* until the late 1st c. For much of the Early Roman period the valley was the focus of a variety of low status industrial activities.¹⁸ Until recently it had been suggested that much of the valley was abandoned in the 4th c. due to flooding.¹⁹ This was clearly not the case in the Upper Walbrook Valley, and there are substantial finds assemblages from Drapers' Gardens and other nearby sites that point to significant domestic and industrial activity in the mid- to late 4th c., although much of the structural evidence for these phases has been removed by post-medieval building work.²⁰

In spite of the overtly 'industrial' nature of the Walbrook Valley, there are good grounds for believing that it was the focus for a variety of ritual activities during the Roman period.²¹ Some of these activities clearly took place in formal contexts and were associated with structures such as the Temple of Mithras.²² Other traces of ritual activity

¹⁶ Barber and Bowsher (2000) 19–20, 319–320; Fulford (2001) 208.

¹⁷ Chaplin and McCormick (1986) 410 Fulford (2001), 209.

¹⁸ For instance, Seeley and Drummond Murray (2005).

¹⁹ Merrifield and Hall (2008) 121.

²⁰ Blurton (1977).

²¹ See Merrifield and Hall (2008) for a full discussion.

²² Shepherd (1998).

suggest lower-level and less formal religious activities, perhaps undertaken as individual acts of worship.²³ Quite what was being venerated, and why, is difficult to reconstruct. The archaeological evidence from Drapers' Gardens and other sites in this part of the city seem to indicate that for most of the Roman period the Walbrook was essentially a refuse-choked open sewer. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that this unhealthy watercourse was associated with a local deity. Alternatively, the Walbrook Valley could be seen as a liminal part of the city. It was an area in which the stream was only held in check by significant engineering works, which were only partially successful in controlling this flood-prone watercourse.²⁴ As such, it might have been perceived as a place where other-worldly powers were particularly potent.

RITUAL WELLS AND SHAFTS IN LATE ROMAN LONDON AND BEYOND

Over fifty years ago, Ross presented an overview of a number of wells and shafts from Late Iron Age and Roman Britain.²⁵ She argued that the character of items within their fills suggested that they probably performed a religious function in their final phases.²⁶ More recently, other authors have drawn attention to this type of depositional context and its ritual connotations.²⁷ Wells differ from shafts, in that their primary function is as a source of fresh water. Such water sources were often the focus of religious worship during the Roman period.²⁸ A number of springs were venerated formally in the Roman period.²⁹ Even wells could be connected to formal cult activities, as at Pagan's Hill (Somerset). At this site, the well was seemingly still being venerated in the 7th c.³⁰

The evidence for the religious veneration of wells and shafts from London and its environs is equally compelling. A recent study of Roman wells and their contents in Southwark has highlighted the presence

²³ Much of the evidence discussed by Merrifield and Hall (2008) would seem to be the result of individual or household worship.

²⁴ Wilmott (1991).

²⁵ Ross (1968).

²⁶ See now Pearce (2004) 92–101; Grimm (2007).

²⁷ Wait (1985), Isserlin (1994), Woodward and Woodward (2004).

²⁸ Bourgeois (1991 and 1992).

²⁹ For instance, Allason-Jones and McKay (1985) and Henig *et al.* (1988).

³⁰ Rahtz and Harris (1957); Rahtz and Watts (1989).

of unusual faunal and artefactual assemblages.³¹ These assemblages could be interpreted as 'well poisonings' but the widespread occurrence of this phenomenon suggests other interpretations are more plausible. Two wells will suffice as examples. At Swan Street an Early Roman well contained a partially articulated human skeleton, a number of largely complete pottery vessels and the skeletons of three dogs (Fig. 3).³² The location of this site, close to a large temple complex at Tabard Square and a Late Roman inhumation cemetery, reinforces its ritual overtones.

A different, but equally striking, Late Roman well, excavated beneath Southwark Cathedral, contained a number of items of funerary and religious sculpture and the remains of a cat and a dog.³³ It has been tentatively suggested that the cathedral may have been preceded by a temple to Attis, and recent excavations at the site have produced further evidence of ritual activity.³⁴ In London's eastern cemetery, a poorly dated Roman period pit yielded the articulated remains of a dog, a horse and a deer (of similar age to the Drapers' example), which were interpreted as a symbolic hunt.³⁵ Similarly, Late Roman shafts from Keston, in the London suburb of Bromley were associated with funerary monuments and contained very unusual groups of articulated animal bones.³⁶

One of the best parallels for the Drapers' well comes from Shadwell in East London. Here a small settlement associated with a large bathhouse and other structures existed during the 3rd and 4th c. Towards the end of the settlement's occupation, perhaps around A.D. 400, the settlement's piped water supply failed, and a crude well was dug to provide freshwater. This well was deliberately backfilled with a number of complete and semi-complete ceramic vessels, including an abnormally high percentage of red-slipped tablewares from the Oxfordshire region, along with a copper-alloy bowl.³⁷ These vessels were interpreted as a 'closure deposit' which marked the end of the settlement.

The role of wells and shafts in Romano-British ritual practices seems well-established. In London, such features are associated with

³¹ Seeley (2009).

³² Beasley (2006); Beasley (2006) 41–45.

³³ Hammerson (1978) 209.

³⁴ Temple to Attis: Henig (2001) 14–15. Ritual activity: Divers *et al.* (2009).

³⁵ Barber and Bowsher (2000) 319–20.

³⁶ Piercy-Fox (1967); Philp (1985).

³⁷ Douglas *et al.* (2011).

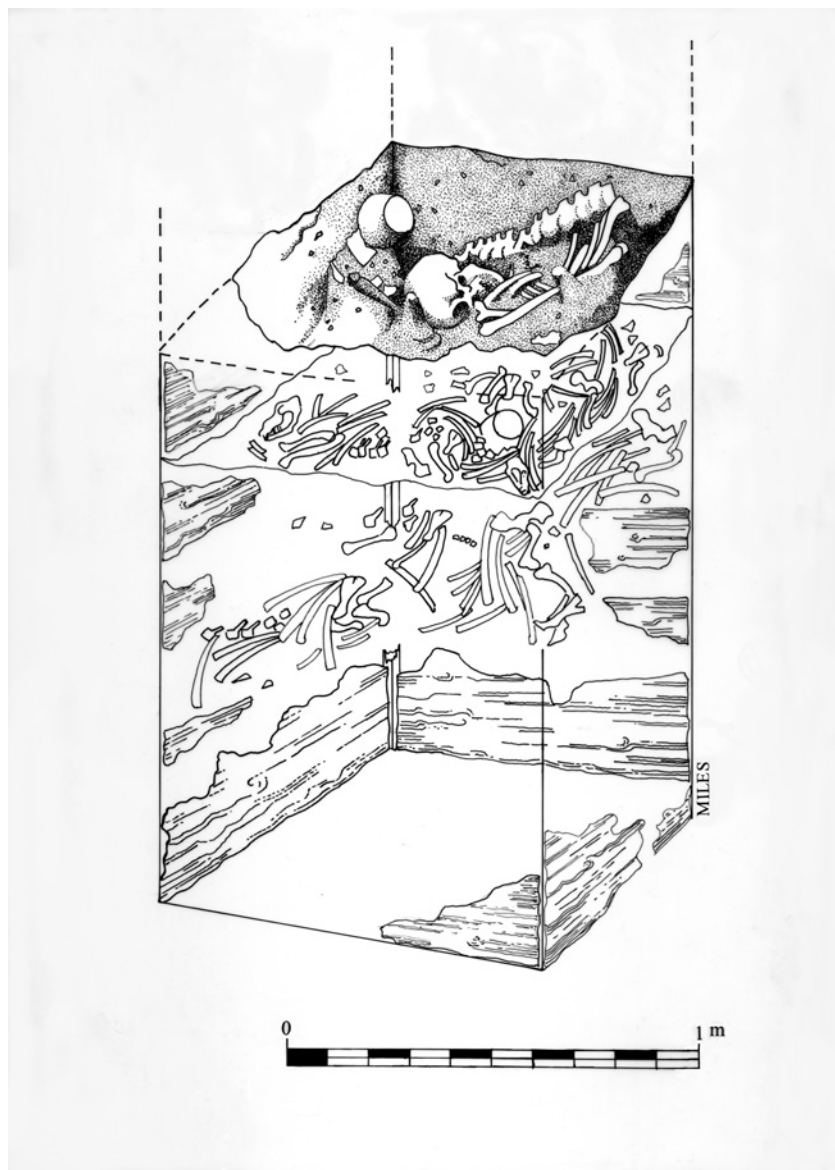


Fig. 3 A reconstruction of the Late Roman well or ritual shaft at Swan St, Southwark.

funerary and explicitly religious activities. Occasionally, the deposition of unusual finds assemblages in these wells and shafts can be connected with the apparent abandonment of sites. The Drapers' Gardens well and its contents should be placed in this local context. It can also be argued that the deposition of the hoard represents the continuity of a belief system that venerated wells and shafts and which had its origins in the Iron Age.

DEPOSITING THE HOARD: A SYMBOLIC NARRATIVE

The preceding discussion has argued that the Drapers' Gardens hoard contains an unusual collection of artefacts and ecofacts that make a 'ritual' interpretation of its deposition possible. This argument has been bolstered by a brief discussion of the religious role that the Walbrook Valley may have played in the Roman period and also a consideration of the religious significance of wells and shafts in Roman London and beyond. What follows is an attempt to construct a narrative of the hoard's deposition, which is combined with a tentative consideration of what the items placed in the well may have symbolised. Such an exercise, though speculative, begins to reveal the complexity of the ritual act and its potential meanings.

The two bronze *nummi* that appear to have been deposited in the well first have been referred to above (Fig. 4). They are typical losses, and would have had a low monetary value. It would be easy to dismiss them as insignificant, except for their value as dating evidence. However, their commonplace nature should not blind us to the possibility that they were used in a symbolic role.

Coins in Late Antiquity were probably the most frequently encountered and portable depiction of the emperor's semi-divine personage. They served not just as money but, as Cassiodorus was to observe in the 6th c., as a means of distributing the ruler's image.³⁸ The significance of the image was such that even when silver *siliquae* were being clipped in Britain during the 5th c., the imperial portrait was never damaged, although the imperial legends might be completely cut from the coins.³⁹ Therefore, the coins may have been included in the hoard as a symbolic reference to the emperor.

³⁸ Cassiod. *Var.* 7; Hodgkin (1886) 304.

³⁹ Guest (2005) 110.



Fig. 4a



Fig. 4b



Fig. 4c



Fig. 4d

Fig. 4 Bronze *nummi*: chance loss
or a placed symbol of the emperor's image?

After the coins, two further objects—a copper-alloy bracelet and a bucket binding (Fig. 5)—were deposited before the vessels were placed in the well. The bracelet, which is of a common Late Roman type, had been bent into an S-shape.⁴⁰ This seems to have been done deliberately, and can be interpreted as the ‘ritual killing’ of the object; a phenomenon common in funerary and religious contexts.⁴¹ Bracelets are generally accepted to have been a predominantly female personal adornment in 4th c. Britain and have been interpreted by some as having a religious significance.⁴² Philpott has even argued that in burials bracelets could have functioned as symbolic dowries for unmarried women.⁴³ As the only personal adornment in the well this object is unusual and its breaking may have been a highly symbolic act.

The iron bucket binding is a utilitarian object but it too can be interpreted in ritual terms. Presumably this binding derives from the bucket used to draw water from the well. No other parts of this bucket were recovered and it would seem that the bucket was dismantled and, with the exception of the binding, discarded elsewhere. The destruction of the bucket would clearly symbolise the end of the well’s life.

After the coins, bracelet and bucket binding had been placed, then came the main event: the deposition of the twenty metal vessels. At the most superficial level these vessels represent a collection of late antique tableware. Silver vessels, well-known to us through hoards and the writings of late antique authors like Sidonius Apollinaris, were what the highest echelons of society used as tableware and also as a portable form of wealth.⁴⁴ This collection of copper and lead-alloy vessels presumably represents tableware used at a lower social status.

The use of the term ‘tableware’ does gloss over the multitude of functions that these vessels served. There are certainly bowls and basins that may have been used for presenting and serving food or in ablutions but there are also a variety of other forms that served other functions. The trivet must have been used for heating the contents of another vessel and a variety of buckets, ladles and a jug were surely associated with liquids. The use of water in ablutions is a possibility but a function in relation to the preparation and serving of wine seems likely too.

⁴⁰ Crummy (1983) fig. 47.

⁴¹ Grinsell (1961); Philpott (1991) 239; Woodward and Leach (1993) fig. 111.

⁴² Puttock (2002) 108.

⁴³ Philpott (1991) 233.

⁴⁴ Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 17; Anderson (1936) 255.

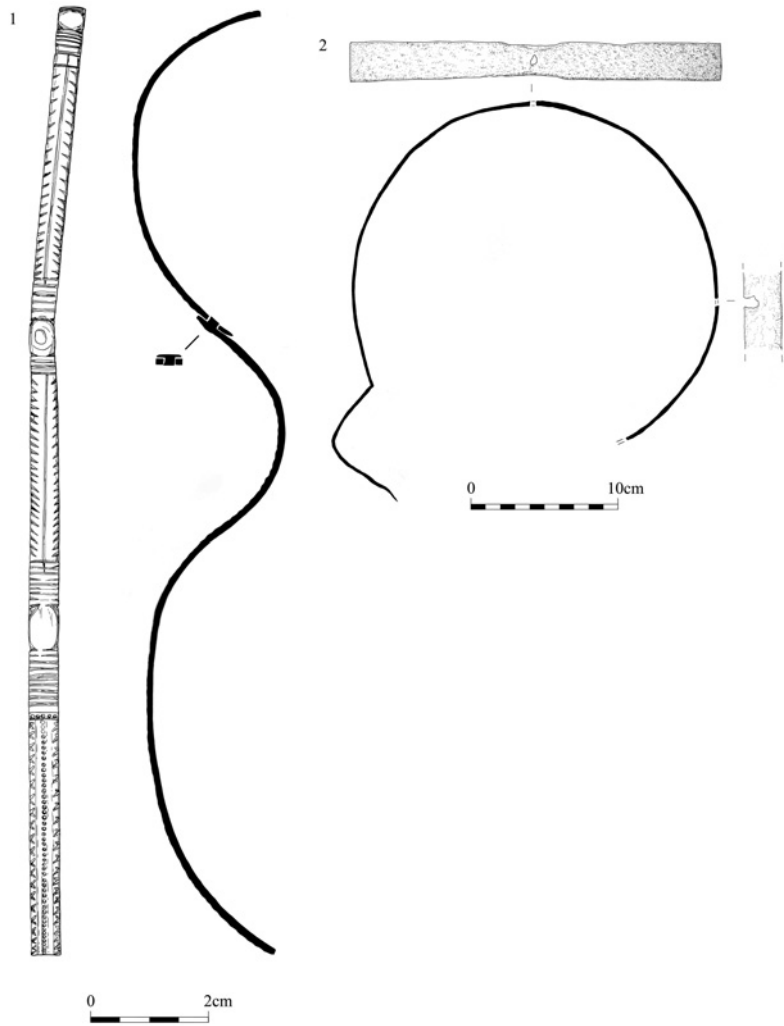


Fig. 5 Ritual killing? The broken bucket binding and deliberately bent bracelet.

The hanging basin, which probably went into the well first, has a particular connection to the consumption of wine and its leonine escutcheon may be a reference to Bacchic iconography.⁴⁵ If these vessels were used for holding wine mixed with water then it could be seen as an interpretation of the *cantharus* (a chalice where wine and water could be mixed as the host entertained his guests). Common in 4th c. mosaic iconography, the *cantharus* can be seen as a symbol of conviviality but was also adopted by Christian communities as a symbol of the Eucharist.⁴⁶ By the 7th c., Early Medieval hanging bowls, which developed from the Late Roman hanging basin form in Britain, were to be found in high status graves and occasionally carry overtly Christian symbols suggesting a ritual function.⁴⁷

If the hoard represents the preparation, presentation and consumption of food and drink then it seems reasonable to suggest that this took place within a context of 'conspicuous consumption' or feasting. However, if this is so we must also accept that we have only part of the residue of these activities represented in the well. There are no animal bones or other food waste in this part of the deposition, and if wine consumption was important then the absence of drinking vessels must be significant. These could have been manufactured from metal, glass, pottery or even wood, but none were present. Furthermore, the so-called Irchester bowl, a common Late Roman metal vessel form in Britain, is absent from the hoard and its presence might have been expected.⁴⁸ From this it can be concluded that only a part of the residue of the events that led to the deposition of this hoard was recovered and the remainder was disposed of elsewhere in an unknown manner.

A final point that needs to be made is that metal vessels in Late Antiquity were considered as suitable gifts for individuals and deities. Silver plate was given as imperial largesse and copper-alloy vessels may have functioned in gift exchange systems at a lesser social scale.⁴⁹ Metal vessels have been recovered in clearly ritual contexts in the spring dedicated to the goddess Sulis-Minerva at Bath (Somerset) and

⁴⁵ Adams (forthcoming).

⁴⁶ Perring (2003) 109.

⁴⁷ Hanging bowls: Adams (forthcoming); Bruce Mitford and Raven (2005). Ritual function: Blair (2005) 24–25.

⁴⁸ Irchester bowl: for instance Farley *et al.* (1988). Absence: Micheli (1992) fig. 13.

⁴⁹ Guest (2005) 24–26.

it is possible that others could have been deposited there.⁵⁰ Petts has also drawn attention to the ritual deposition of hoards of pewter and lead tanks decorated with Christian motifs.⁵¹ It suggests that this phenomenon is not just confined to a 'pagan' milieu.⁵²

A thin layer of mud, perhaps twenty centimetres or so thick, was backfilled over the vessels and then the partially articulated remains of a juvenile deer were placed in the well (Fig. 6). Significant parts of this animal were missing, particularly the skull and vertebrae (see above). Some of these could have been missed during excavation or their absence may point to the consumption or use of parts of the carcass elsewhere. It is easy to imagine that some parts of this animal could have been eaten or its head cut off and set atop a post as a symbolic marker. As was noted above, the absence of butchery marks does not have any impact on this argument—a skilled butcher would leave no marks.⁵³

The presence of the deer has already been commented upon, as has their rarity in 'normal' 4th c. bone assemblages.⁵⁴ The remains of this animal must imply a hunt beyond the walls of *Londinium*. In a symbolic context hunting can be understood as a metaphor for the quest for understanding and also as a metaphor for the struggle to live a Christian life.⁵⁵ Henig has even gone so far as to interpret hunt scenes in the famous Hinton-St.-Mary (Dorset) mosaic as a reference to Psalm 22, although this is controversial.⁵⁶ Thus the capture, sacrifice and consumption of a young deer could have carried a number of significant symbolic and religious messages.

The age of the deer also allows us to place the hoard's deposition within a particular season. The deer seems to have been aged between 4–5 months at its death, and if (as is normal today) the deer was born in May or June, this would suggest that the hoard was placed in the well during the autumn. Autumn is important in agricultural societies as the turn of the year, a time after the crops have been harvested and before the descent into winter has begun. It is thus tempting to suggest that the deposition of the hoard may have occurred during a

⁵⁰ Henig *et al.* (1988); Isserlin (2007).

⁵¹ Petts (2003).

⁵² Ripoll (2004).

⁵³ K. Rielly *pers. comm.*

⁵⁴ Cool (2006) 112–18.

⁵⁵ Perring (2003) 105.

⁵⁶ Psalm 22: in Hartley *et al.* (2006) 204–206. Controversy: Pearce (2008) 209–10.



Fig. 6 The juvenile deer skeleton.

particularly significant religious festival like Samhain or the autumnal equinox.⁵⁷

Following the deposition of the deer carcass, the well shaft appears to have been backfilled with soil and residual rubbish typical of many of the deposits at the site. However, a considerable depth of stratigraphy that the well was cut through was destroyed by 19th and 20th c. building work. It remains possible that other ritual deposits were laid down towards the top of the well shaft.

The backfilling of the well obviously removes this feature as a source of water and made the hoard unrecoverable. The destruction of the water source could be seen as symbolic of the destruction of the settlement's life and thus it seems reasonable to interpret the whole group as a 'closure deposit' marking the end of 'Roman' activity in this part of *Londinium*. Alternatively, the deposition of these vessels could be seen as a type of talismanic burial where the burial of objects imbued with special significance was seen as giving supernatural protection to an area.⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

At first sight, the Drapers' Gardens hoard seemed to be an eloquent testimony to the insecurity of Britain's last days as a diocese of the western Roman empire. However, detailed consideration of the well's contents strongly suggests that this group of metal vessels and other objects were placed as part of a complex ritual. The hoard's location in an area that seems to have been venerated during the Roman period (and the realisation that other wells and shafts in London and elsewhere were the focus for religious activities) suggests that the hoard's deposition was part of a complex belief system whose origins can be traced back into the Iron Age.

It appears that each of the hoard's components may have carried a series of important symbolic messages whose actual meanings can only be partially discerned. It is not possible to determine what deity or belief system these symbolic messages were directed towards. The

⁵⁷ Swift (2001) 89, on seasonal votive acts see Isserlin (1994) and Woodward and Woodward (2004).

⁵⁸ See Lavan, this volume. I am grateful to him for this thought-provoking idea.

alien nature of the ritual (from a modern perspective) would suggest a 'pagan' context but in the late antique empire, where pagan myths and beliefs were intertwined with various forms of Christianity, it may be a fruitless exercise to seek a label for this ritual act. Clearly, the act is the latest recoverable 'Roman' archaeological event on the site and as such can be seen as marking the end of the Roman period. As an act of closure, the deposition of the hoard and the backfilling of the well suggests that whoever was drawing a line under their life at some indeterminate point post A.D. 375 was doing so in a very final and definite way.

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ICONOGRAPHY IN MATERIAL CULTURE

FROM PAGAN TO CHRISTIAN: RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY IN MATERIAL CULTURE FROM SAGALASSOS

Peter Talloen

Abstract

The evidence of domestic artefacts bearing religiously inspired imagery from Sagalassos (south-west Turkey) is used here to trace how the religious revolution of Late Antiquity affected daily life and how that evidence may reflect wider patterns in the shift from a pagan to a Christian culture in Late Antiquity. After a period characterised by a common iconographic repertoire shared by pagans and Christians alike, in which the Christian impact on material culture was limited, the material expression of the changing religious atmosphere became more visible from the second half of the 4th c. onwards and eventually resulted in a canonic Christian iconography.

INTRODUCTION

The material culture of Late Antiquity is relatively underexplored, particularly its potential to reflect religious belief and practice.¹ It is of course far from easy to identify religious behaviour on the basis of artefacts alone, and we must always keep in mind that the categories of ‘Christian’ and ‘pagan’ are neither as homogeneous nor as mutually exclusive as is often assumed. Nevertheless, the period from the early 4th c. to the early 7th c. witnessed a gradual yet dramatic transformation in the religious identity of the Mediterranean world. It is the aim of this article to shed some light on that transformation by examining the evidence of domestic artefacts bearing religiously inspired imagery from Sagalassos, and how that evidence may reflect wider patterns in the shift from a pagan to a Christian culture in Late Antiquity.

¹ For an introduction see Russell (1982); also see Dark (2004) 1–3 on the archaeology of Byzantine everyday life.

Sagalassos has been the focus of extensive archaeological research in recent years.² A prominent Late Roman provincial city and pottery production centre in the ancient region of Pisidia (south-western Turkey), Sagalassos was an active urban settlement in the 4th to 6th c. before being abandoned in the 7th c. and has preserved a variety of artefacts from across the late antique period. These finds include a considerable number of domestic utensils which offer a somewhat neglected but highly important window into social and religious life.³ The iconography present on such items cannot simply be dismissed as decoration, but rather, as the evidence from Sagalassos demonstrates, offers us an opportunity to trace how the religious revolution of Late Antiquity affected daily life at a level accessible to all.⁴

CHRIST AND DIONYSUS: THE 4TH C. BACKGROUND AND THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN MATERIAL CULTURE

Prior to the 4th c., the Christian impact on material culture was limited to say the least.⁵ The majority of extant pre-Constantinian Christian art is funerary in nature, and only gradually were familiar Graeco-Roman artefacts and symbols adapted for Christian use. Following the 'conversion' of Constantine in A.D. 312 imperial support enabled Christians to redefine their identity in a new context of religious respectability. Yet, while numerous Christian communities are attested in the 4th c., throughout the eastern Mediterranean, they left little imprint on the material culture of daily life at that stage. Everyday or domestic items bearing recognizable Christian symbols only

² On Sagalassos in the late antique period, see recently Waelkens *et al.* (2006).

³ It is of course understood that the majority of items used in daily life have long been lost, as they were made out of organic materials such as wood, leather or cloth. Ceramics and items of stone, glass or metal do survive, although the last two categories were easily melted down for reuse and what we possess thus represents only a fraction of what was originally in existence.

⁴ The limited percentage of pottery with religiously inspired decoration compared to the total output of ceramic production, for instance, identifies these items as intentional statements. Moreover, the close correspondence between decorated pottery and artefacts of cultic activity allows us to use it as a guide to religious actuality: Talloen and Poblome (2005). For a similar study on the Levant see Ribak (2004), who demonstrates that everyday artefacts bearing religiously inspired symbols were actively used to assert religious identity in daily life and can therefore help to determine the religious persuasion of their users.

⁵ Jensen (2000), Snyder (2003).

appeared from the second half of the 4th c. onwards, and in most areas of the empire, including Pisidia, we must wait until the 5th c.⁶

This lack of physical evidence is not due to a failure of the archaeological record. Rather, it corresponds to the close relationship between Christians and non-Christians. The early Christians utilised traditional household settings and items and generally their material remains cannot be distinguished from the contemporary non-Christian culture. Thus there was a common iconographic repertoire shared by pagans and Christians alike, including idyllic-bucolic scenes of harvest and the 'good shepherd', and subjects such as the praying figure or *orans*.⁷ For many of these scenes their meaning would have depended on their physical context and the interpretation of the viewer. The formal and narrative fluidity of such interchangeable imagery echoes a flexibility of meaning and interpretation found widely in Late Antiquity.⁸ It also illustrates the fact the boundaries between pagan and Christian communities in the 4th c. were not as rigid as some contemporary historians would have us believe.⁹

The material expression of the changing religious atmosphere begins to become more visible from the second half of the 4th c. onwards. Some of the earliest indications for the development of an explicitly Christian material culture are provided by African Red Slip Ware. This pottery was widely exported and was the principal tableware throughout the eastern Mediterranean in the 3rd and 4th c.¹⁰ The Christian subject matter of these North African ceramics consists primarily of scenes of deliverance, with a predominance of Old Testament figures believed to refer to the life of Christ and the salvation offered by the Church, notably Daniel and Jonah.¹¹ The popular cult of the martyrs, who through their suffering reproduced the passion of Christ himself, also featured among the first Christian topics to be represented on

⁶ Talloen and Poblome (2005) 70–73. The same pattern is visible in Athens: Castrén (1999) 213; and Corinth: Sanders (2005) 420.

⁷ These were well-known late antique motifs with an allegorical connotation. See Snyder (2003) 23–66 for an overview of these and other Early Christian symbols.

⁸ Elsner (1998) 153.

⁹ Bayliss (2004) 30 and n. 256.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive overview of the imagery present on African ceramics, see recently Herrmann and van den Hoek (2002).

¹¹ Garbsch and Overbeck (1989) 127–33; Herrmann and van den Hoek (2002) 28–45.

decorated African pottery.¹² Yet the depiction of these biblical subjects drew in turn on long-standing pagan artistic traditions, including the depiction of Daniel and Jonah in the nude, like pagan heroes.

African Red Slip Ware is, in any case, an exception to the rule. Most other centres of artefact production did not yet produce explicitly Christian items in the 4th c. By and large, contemporary material culture still reflected ongoing pagan traditions, with a host of heroes and deities continuing to feature on domestic objects. The most prominent pagan figures include Apollo, Heracles and Achilles, but one deity in particular appears to have been the focus of much attention in Sagalassos and throughout the eastern Mediterranean during the 4th c. A.D., namely Dionysus.¹³ His popularity is attested both in literary sources (most notably the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus of Panopolis) and material culture, and perhaps reflects his rising position in the pagan pantheon at that time. Indeed, Dionysus may have been promoted as an alternative to Christ, facilitated by their shared characteristics of miraculous birth, mystery cult and divine resurrection.¹⁴ Dionysus' image occurs on many different media, from mosaics and textiles to silver and bronze plate, and at a domestic level he is a prominent figure

¹² Garbsch and Overbeck (1989) 159–60; Herrmann and van den Hoek (2002) 56–60.

¹³ A deity present on the decorated pottery of Sagalassos since imperial times (Talloon and Poblome (2005) 63), Apollo remained popular in Late Antiquity, something that can be related to his embodiment of the divinity of the sun (Helios, Sol Invictus) with whom several emperors had identified themselves (MacMullen (1984) 44; MacCoull (1991) 136) and who also featured on African ceramics (Herrmann and van den Hoek (2002) 80–82). Heracles was also connected with the figure of the emperor as one of the protective divinities of the tetrarchy (Uhlenbrook (1986) 111), while according to some scholars his late antique prominence was in response to a need for a more personal religious experience through the suffering and apotheosis of the god (Uhlenbrook (1986) 14; Karivieri (2001) 185). His twelve labours feature commonly on different categories of material culture in Late Antiquity (African ceramics: Garbsch and Overbeck (1989) 175–78; Athenian lamps: Karivieri (2001) 185–92). According to Zosimus (4.18.2–4), Achilles still enjoyed worship in the late 4th c. An entire series of African Red Slip is devoted to his life, undoubtedly copies from similar decorations on metalwork (Garbsch and Overbeck (1989) 164–74), while his departure for the Trojan War was the topic for the central *emblema* of a late 4th c. mosaic at the Library of Sagalassos: Waelkens *et al.* (2000). Dionysus: Daszewski (1985); Parrish (1995). According to some scholars Dionysus was the great deity of the later Greek East: Bowersock (1990) 41–53, Huskinson (2004) 140.

¹⁴ Daszewski (1985) 38–45; Bowersock (1990) 41–53. The birth of Dionysus is represented on the 4th c. floor mosaic from Nea Paphos and offers 'a striking pagan version of the theme of the epiphany of a divine child which would become one of Christianity's most significant iconographic forms' (Elsner (1998) 220).

on tablewares, lamps and other decorated ceramics. Such Dionysiac imagery is a common feature of the pottery produced at Sagalassos, especially the *oinophoroi*, mould-made flasks that were probably used as portable wine containers, a type fit for the god of wine (fig. 1). Sagalassos wares decorated with *Dionysiaca* were exported to cities in neighbouring regions such as Perge in Pamphylia and Lycian Myra, and even as far as Carthage and Egypt.¹⁵

It has often been argued that by Late Antiquity mythological subjects such as the *Dionysiaca* had largely lost their pagan meaning. Popular deities had become mere personifications of natural forces or human qualities. Aphrodite personified beauty, while Dionysus represented earthly fertility. In this way Dionysus was no more than a neutralised mythological subject that made an appropriate adornment for a drinking party.¹⁶ To a degree, the evidence from Sagalassos might support this view. Yet equally, it can be argued that the Dionysiac imagery of the ceramics drew upon and reinforced correct rituals and propriety in honour of the god, and that this continued in the 4th c. in direct, if not always explicit, competition with the rise of Christianity.

In the imperial period, vessels with Dionysiac imagery were already extremely popular among the pottery produced in the city.¹⁷ As a type of tableware, Sagalassos Red Slip Ware was intended for use on the dining table, a focal point for sociability, where Dionysus—as the deity of the symposium—was at home. Decorative scenes generally included dancing, feasting and vine harvesting in narrative sequences, but Dionysus himself and other members of his ecstatic party, or *thiasos* like Pan and the satyrs, were equally present to partake in the pleasure of the dining room (fig. 2). In addition, Dionysus is represented on Sagalassos pottery in a state of drunkenness supported by a satyr, just as he appears in the statue groups displayed in the Antonine Nymphaeum on the city's Upper Agora, which was dedicated to the god (fig. 3). This evocation of statues of Dionysus suggests that the scenes on the pottery were based, at least in part, on local religious cult and practice.¹⁸

¹⁵ Poblome (1998) 207–10.

¹⁶ Buckton (1994) 39. Also Harl argues that many mythological motifs in the decorative arts of the 4th and 5th c. are best regarded as good taste rather than expressions of religious belief: Harl (1990) 16.

¹⁷ Talloen and Poblome (2005) 62–63.

¹⁸ Talloen and Poblome (2005) 63.



Fig. 1a

Fig. 1a–b *Oinophoroi* with Dionysiaca from Sagalassos: a) *Oinophoros* representing two busts of Dionysus, one of which is crowned by a standing winged Nike holding a palm branch, found at the Roman Baths of Sagalassos (inv. no. SA99RB2/64) and dated to the late 4th to early 5th c. (Sagalassos archive).



Fig. 1b

Fig. 1a–b *Oinochoai* with Dionysiaca from Sagalassos: b) *Oinochoi* representing three busts of Dionysus underneath arcades preceded by members of the *thiasos*, found at an unknown location in Egypt where it is kept at the Museum for Egyptian Antiquities at Cairo (inv. no. J.E. 89081) and dated to the 5th c. (Courtesy of the Museum of Antiquities).

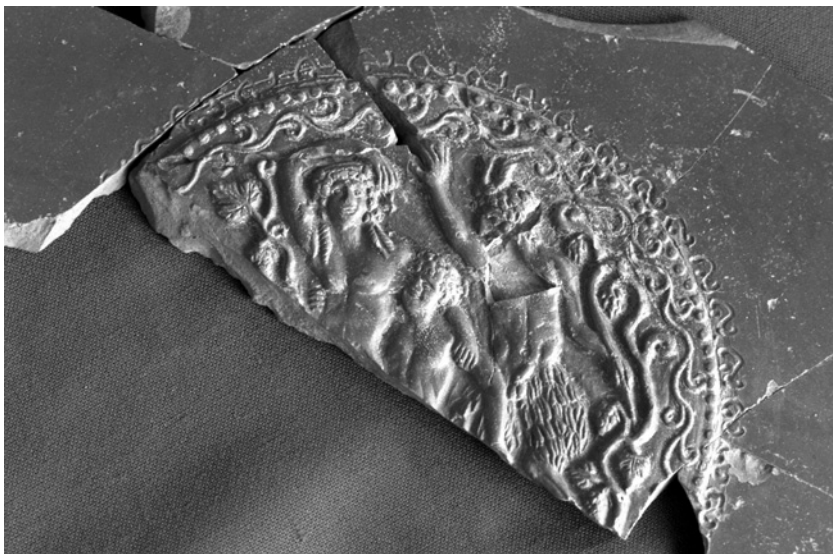


Fig. 2 Serving tray with a central medallion representing a drunken Dionysus supported by a satyr and accompanied by Pan, found at the Domestic Area (SA2001DA/93) and dated to the 2nd c. A.D. (Sagalassos archive)

Dionysiac iconography featured regularly in the Early and Middle Imperial period, but in the course of the 4th c. it achieved a virtual monopoly among the religiously inspired decorated pottery of Sagalassos. That such Dionysiac scenes were not merely invoking the god as a symbol of ‘a good time’ appears to be further corroborated by the treatment of the statues of Dionysus in the Upper Agora Nymphaeum that was dedicated to the god. Mythological sculpture generally persisted in the late antique urban landscape as part of the ancient heritage.¹⁹ In this instance, however, both corner *aediculae* housing effigies of Dionysus were sealed off by the local Christian community, as indicated by the crosses that were inscribed on the used building blocks, sometime during the 6th to early 7th c. (fig. 4).²⁰ This suggests that the god was perceived as a dangerous opponent by the Christians, who did not allow him to meet the public gaze, while other statuary of

¹⁹ Saradi-Mendelovici (1990); Hannestad (1994, 2002).

²⁰ Waelkens *et al.* (1997) 151 and 162. Beside this nymphaeum, a temple was also dedicated to the deity (see Talloen and Vercauteren in this volume). Finally, the importance of his cult at Sagalassos is underlined by the fact that one of his priests was a Roman senator: Lanckoronski (1892) 229 no. 212.



Fig. 3 Statue of a drunken Dionysus supported by a satyr, from the left *aedicula* of the nymphaeum on the Upper Agora and dated to the 2nd c. A.D. (Sagalassos archive)



Fig. 4 Tufa blocks with inscribed crosses used to seal off the corner *aediculae* of the nymphaeum on the Upper Agora, dated to the 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

Nike, Nemesis and Asclepius remained on the public stage. Moreover, the fact that the production of *oinophoroi* with Dionysiac imagery only began at Sagalassos in the 4th c., and continued into the 6th c., may indicate that Dionysus' cult was still vital and active at a time when the cities of the region were being openly Christianised. Although Dionysiac imagery does not always necessarily have a religious significance, this evidence suggests there was a degree of competition between Christianity and the popular local cult of Dionysus, and that Dionysiac and other mythological themes on pottery are open to a more spiritual or cultic interpretation than has often been assumed.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MATERIAL CULTURE IN 5TH AND 6TH CENTURY SAGALASSOS

The Dionysiac imagery of the Sagalassos *oinophoroi* attests to the flourishing production of pagan imagery in the city well into the 6th c.²¹

²¹ Dionysus also remained present in the urban context of Christian Sardis: Hanfmann and Buchwald (1983) 192.

This accords with the evidence from elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. 'Images of myth evoked the rich imaginative world of religion, romance and education in the classical tradition which formed some of the key categories and principles by which the empire's citizens chose to live their lives'.²² Dionysus still appears on mosaics dated to the early 6th c., and was the pagan god who endured longest in the iconographical repertoire of African Red Slip Ware.²³ In Sagalassos, statues of Nike likewise remained visible in the public landscape of the city, and her image was also preserved on the locally produced *oinophoroi*. Whether such imagery indicates continuing cultic devotion is impossible to determine without more explicit evidence, as many pagan deities had become domesticated in Christian households.²⁴ Yet, it is clear that in public monuments, and above all in private circles, paganism survived far longer and more extensively than our Christian sources would like us to believe.²⁵

Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that there was a significant shift in the material culture of the 5th and 6th c. that came with the large-scale Christianisation of Roman society from the end of the 4th c. onwards. The emergence of a Christian landscape on an imperial scale is reflected in turn in the iconography of everyday life. A whole range of ceramic household utensils, including plates, *oinophoroi* and oil lamps, gradually come to display specifically Christian symbols including crosses, cross-monograms and fishes (fig. 5). These motifs appear on Sagalassos Red Slip Ware, as well as African Red Slip Ware, Phocaean Red Slip Ware or Late Roman C ware, and Athenian lamps.²⁶ The same Christian symbols also furnished metal appliances (locks,

²² Elsner (1998) 99.

²³ Mosaics: see for example the House of the Falconer at Argos: Akerström-Hougen (1974). African Red Slip Ware: Hayes (1972) 261–63 and fig. 50.223–24; Lund (2001) 205. The 62nd canon of the council of Trullo (A.D. 691–92) condemns the invocation of Dionysus during the vintage cycle, indicating that the god still enjoyed some veneration, even at the end of the 7th c.: Trombley (1978).

²⁴ Rather than evidence of outright paganism on the part of their owners, these pagan motifs should be read as embodying ideas of plenty and good fortune, according to Maguire (1999) 246. The presence of pagan deities in their houses did not seem to bother the Christian owners. That said, it is possible that this relaxed attitude toward pagan art was a privilege of the well-to-do: Caseau (1999) 35.

²⁵ Trombley (1985) and (1993–94, 1); Harl (1990). The actions of the bishop of Ephesus in the 6th c., for instance, clearly demonstrate the tenacity of paganism: Whitby (1991).

²⁶ See respectively Talloen and Poblome (2005) 70–73, Lund (2001) 202, Vaag (2001) 219–22, Ladstätter and Sauer (2005) 152 and Karavieri (2001) 192–93.



Fig. 5a

Fig. 5a–c Christian symbols and scenes on Sagalassos Red Slip Ware: a) Mould for an *oinophoros* decorated with a Greek cross, found at the Potters' Quarter (SA2004PQ/37) and dated to the 5th to 6th c. (Sagalassos archive)



Fig. 5b



Fig. 5c

Fig. 5a-c Christian symbols and scenes on Sagalassos Red Slip Ware: b) oil lamp with a cross-shaped handle, found at the market building to the north of the Upper Agora (SA1994UAN/174) and dated to the 5th to 6th c. (Sagalassos archive); c) oil lamp displaying the sacrifice of Isaac, found on the Upper Agora (inv. no. SA1996UA/135) and dated to the 5th to 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

buckles) and elements of jewellery (pendants, cameos and signet rings) as numerous instances from Sagalassos and Cilician Anemurium demonstrate.²⁷ The Old Testament scenes present on 4th c. African Red Slip Ware persisted and now became widespread throughout the eastern Mediterranean as exemplified at Sagalassos (fig. 5c). But now Christian typological iconography also included New Testament themes, with a cycle of narrative scenes from Christ's ministry and passion, as well as images and items related to the cult of saints.²⁸ This new Christian symbolism, particularly as depicted on artefacts for domestic use, took the cause of Christianisation beyond the monumental programmes of the churches into the homes of the faithful.

Yet this shift did not mark a complete break with traditional pagan iconography. Alongside the distinctively Christian images that now appeared, the new Christian iconography also incorporated, and at the same time reinterpreted, themes from the pagan past. The Christian converts of the late 4th to early 5th c. came from a rich material culture which many preferred to adapt rather than abandon. This translated itself in the incorporation of the pagan past into the artistic or material production of the emerging Church, and resulted in what we have termed 'residual iconography'. Three significant instances of such adaptation attested in Sagalassos concern the goddess of Victory, Nike, the Mother Goddess and once again the cult of Dionysus. The iconographical type of Nike gave form to a divine concept shared by pagans and Christians alike, the angel, and developed its canonical winged form in the 5th c.²⁹ As we have seen, statues and other images of Nike remained popular in Sagalassos and the derived image of a winged figure holding a wreath is also present on *oinophoroi* from this period (fig. 6).³⁰ The cult of angels was widespread throughout Asia

²⁷ Waelkens and Talloen (in press); Russell (1982).

²⁸ Christ's ministry and passion: Herrmann and van den Hoek (2002) 47–50. Cult of saints: One category of material culture in particular stands out, the so-called *ampullae* or miniature flasks that served as Early Christian souvenirs, holding holy substances such as blessed oil, water, soil etc. The examples from Egypt are especially famous, notably the so-called 'Menas flasks' from the pilgrim centre of the saint at Abu Mina, which date to the 5th–6th c. A.D.: Bangert (forthcoming). But there are similar types known from Asia Minor which feature saints or Biblical figures: Anderson (2004). Their appearance in the 5th c. corresponds to a popular surge in pilgrimages to Christian sites and to the homes of holy men.

²⁹ Podskalsky and Cutler (1991) 97; Kazhdan and Cutler (1991) 1475.

³⁰ On the continuing presence of Nike in the cityscape of late antique Ephesus, see Thür (2003) 270.



Fig. 6 Mould for a tetragonal *oinophoros* representing a flying winged Nike holding a wreath, found at the Potters' Quarter (SA2004PQ/40) and dated to the late 5th to early 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

Minor. That of Saint Michael the Archangel in particular seems to have taken an important place in the religious environment of Sagalassos during the 5th and 6th c., as indicated by several plates carrying acclamations of the *Michaelitai*, the followers of the Archangel.³¹

The *Theotokos* (bearer of God) image of the seated Virgin Mary with child, in its turn, is a continuation of the popular mother-theme represented by goddesses like Isis, Aphrodite and other *kourotrophoi*.³² The epiphany of a divine child would become one of Christianity's most significant iconographic forms. Some of the earliest Virgin and child imagery comes from Egypt in this period. Yet, this type was also very common elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, as illustrated by an *ampulla*—a small flask for sanctified oil or water—from Sagalassos depicting the *adoratio* of the infant Jesus by one of the Magi (fig. 7).³³ Interestingly, towards the right of the main scene, there is a bust of Dionysus.

The continuing prominence of Dionysus in material culture from Sagalassos is also reflected in Christian artefacts. We already mentioned his presence in a Christian *adoratio* scene. It is uncertain whether the bust is present here as a remnant of the past or as an element of the present religious landscape, although it was in this period that the architectural elements from Dionysus' temple in Sagalassos were reused in the construction of the city's largest basilica (BE1), where the reliefs of satyrs and silens remained visible.³⁴ Attributes of the Dionysiac cult such as the vine and the *kantharos* were adopted into Christian eucharistic symbolism, with the frequent appearance of vine scrolls in Christian art recalling the words of Christ, 'I am the true vine' (John 15:1).³⁵ A late 5th to early 6th c. hexagonal *oinophoros* from Sagalassos, featuring a stylised depiction of the Eucharist, with a cross on top of a globe placed underneath the *ciborium* and surrounded by vines and loaves of bread, is a fine example of the adoption of such imagery (fig. 8).

A further example of residual iconography from Sagalassos is provided by the 'divine rider'. Excavations throughout the city have

³¹ Waelkens and Talloen (in press).

³² Elsner (1998) 220–21.

³³ Hayes (1997) 88 pl. 36. The origin of this piece, kept at the British Museum (inv. no. MLA 1882.1–9.1), is reported as unknown but could be identified as from Sagalassos by the author on the basis of the type and some of the used decorative elements.

³⁴ Waelkens and Talloen (in press). See also the contribution of Talloen and Vercauteren on the fate of temples in Asia Minor in this volume.

³⁵ Buckton (1994) 39–40; Elsner (1998) 100, 153.



Fig. 7 *Ampulla* with an *adoratio* scene from Sagalassos, kept at the British Museum (inv. no. MLA 1882.1–9.1) where it was brought from an unknown location in Asia Minor, and dated to the late 5th c. (Hayes (1997) 88 pl. 36).



Fig. 8 Fragment of a hexagonal *oinophoros* with a stylised representation of the Eucharist, found on the Lower Agora (SA2003LA1/84) and dated to the late 5th to early 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

unearthed a series of warrior figurines on horseback that appear to date to the late 5th to early 6th c. (fig. 9). Previously erroneously identified as images of the indigenous rider god *Kakasbos*, these terracotta figurines are not to be seen as a late antique revival of paganism or a popular continuation of an ancient local cult, for explicitly Christian figurines are present in the same stratigraphical contexts.³⁶ The latter represent a bearded male figure wearing a mitre decorated with a cross, which appears to identify the man as a Christian priest or perhaps even a saint (fig. 10). This type can be associated both chronologically and typologically with the warrior figurines since the spread legs of these priest figures indicate that they too were seated on horseback. Moreover, locally manufactured terracotta masks from the 6th c. also depict the same warrior figures, and the illegible inscription on one such mask was preceded by a cross (fig. 11). We are therefore dealing here with Christian images and can argue that the terracotta figurines represent Christian military saints.³⁷ These rider saints may again be seen as a continuation of long-standing pagan iconography and the descendants of the indigenous rider deities who offered protection in earlier times.³⁸

The terracotta figurines not only illustrate the adaptation of pagan imagery for Christian use but also the continuation of the production and use of terracotta figurines themselves, far beyond the point of their alleged demise. It is traditionally held that the production of these artefacts began to decline from the 3rd c. onwards and disappeared entirely by the 5th c.³⁹ This decline was allegedly due to the triumph of Christianity, for the craft of terracotta was 'too deeply rooted in paganism' to survive.⁴⁰ Yet for the vast majority of the population, conversion to Christianity could not have meant the total abandonment of all aspects of their earlier lives. Rather than a complete change, it represented a coalescence of practices, in which some long-standing

³⁶ *Kakasbos*: Waelkens (1993) 45.

³⁷ Rider figurines have also been found in 6th c. Christian contexts in Egypt, as at the shrine of Saint Menas where they have been interpreted as pilgrim artefacts: Bangert (forthcoming).

³⁸ Talloen and Poblome (2005) 73–77. Elsewhere in south-western Asia Minor, two riders on horseback sounding trumpets on either side of an inscribed Maltese Cross are depicted on the door lintel of a church in northern Lycia. As this arrangement precisely imitates local reliefs of the mounted *Dioskouroi* on either side of a veiled goddess, this too can be seen as a Christian reinterpretation of the rider motif: Talloen (2006) 753.

³⁹ Higgings (1986) 64; Thompson and Vickers (2003) 1486.

⁴⁰ Chesterman (1974) 76; Higgins (1976) 105.



Fig. 9 Terracotta figurine of a warrior on horseback (inv. no. SA2000B1/164), found at the Bouleuterion and dated to the late 5th to early 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).



Fig. 10 Terracotta figurine of a Christian priest or saint (on horseback) found at the Doric Temple (inv. no. SA1991DT/347) and dated to the late 5th to early 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).



Fig. 11 Terracotta mask representing a helmeted warrior, found on the Lower Agora (inv. no. SA2003LA1/79) and dated to the 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

local traditions continued in new forms.⁴¹ The terracotta figurines of Sagalassos comprise not only the aforementioned rider statuettes but also numerous representations of dogs and horses, whose ongoing use in a Christian context is exemplified by the representation of an unidentified animal with a cross incised on its back (fig. 12). Such figures most probably served as offerings, perhaps as representations of the animals for which protection was invoked.⁴²

Despite the hostility of a number of Christian writers, magical practices common among Graeco-Roman pagans also continued little changed under Christianity. People maintained their superstitious belief in the unseen power of the Evil Eye to wreak havoc on people's lives, and in the need to apply instruments to counter its malign

⁴¹ Whitby (1991) 114. On the adoption of 'pagan' rites in Christianity see MacMullen (1997) 103–49. Whether it is true, as is often assumed, that aristocratic circles held on longer to pagan customs and material culture is an important question, but lies beyond the scope of this paper.

⁴² For the offering of animals as ex-votos at Christian shrines, see Zwirn (1999) 440.



Fig. 12 Terracotta figurine of an unidentified four-legged animal with a cross incised on its back, found at the Bouleuterion (inv. no. SA1998B1/28) and dated to the late 5th to early 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

influence.⁴³ This may account for the considerable number of small bronze bells or *tintinnabula* which have been found at city sites throughout the eastern Mediterranean (fig. 13). These objects were used as apotropaic devices above cradles to protect infants or suspended from doorways to secure the entrance to the home, and were as much a part of everyday late antique life as the cooking pot.⁴⁴

Finds from Sagalassos also include a series of 6th c. A.D. medallions carrying the effigy of King Solomon of a type which was widespread in the eastern Mediterranean in this period (fig. 14).⁴⁵ Solomon is depicted as a nimbate horseman in military dress, striking down a prostrate female demon. The holy rider—the generic emblem of good conquering evil—was an especially popular image with pre-Christian roots.⁴⁶ The motif is well-attested not only on amulets but also on

⁴³ On the use of magic in late antique Christianity, see MacMullen (1997) 140–43.

⁴⁴ Russell (1995) 42–45.

⁴⁵ Russell (1995) 40.

⁴⁶ Vikan (1991) 82.



Fig. 13 Two *Tintinnabula* or bronze bells, found at the Doric Fountain House (SA1991N/577) and dated to the 5th to 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).



Fig. 14 Leaded bronze medallion representing Solomon on horseback striking down a prostrate female demon, found at the market building to the north of the Upper Agora (SA1995UAN/159) and dated to the 6th c. (Sagalassos archive).

rings, incised gemstones and bracelets. According to the *Testamentum Solomonis*, one of the most popular late antique magical treatises, Solomon was able to control evil forces through a seal ring given to him by God with which he could 'lock up all the demons'.⁴⁷ The Sagalassos amulets were intended to protect their bearers with the same magical power as the original seal.

FROM THE LATER 6TH CENTURY TO THE MID 7TH CENTURY:
THE LAST DECADES OF SAGALASSOS

From the later 6th c. onwards, we witness the disappearance of pagan elements in the iconography of household items from Sagalassos with terracotta figurines ceasing to exist.⁴⁸ Explicit Christian motifs take over, completely dominating the material culture of daily life, from pottery to articles of adornment. The last phase of pottery production at Sagalassos from A.D. 550 to 650 is completely devoid of pagan imagery such as the *Dionysiaca*.⁴⁹ The *oinophoroi* now depict neutral images such as hunting scenes, graphic motifs and doves on a *kantaros* (fig. 15), while the decoration of other types of ceramic vessels is limited to stamped crosses. The mythological subjects that had lingered on in the private sphere on silver plate similarly disappear by the mid-7th c. A.D. and the utensils (and even food) used in dining were now culturally imbued with intimations of the Last Supper and the Eucharist or Biblical scenes, such as the David plates.⁵⁰

Sacred imagery was thus employed at a domestic level to support the principal religious and temporal institutions of Christian society. The establishment of canonical Christianity led in the visual arts to the slow creation of a canonical iconography for Christian imagery which had no place for pagan motifs.⁵¹ This transition from an older and more diverse culture towards a firmly Christian society, along with the gradual disappearance of residual pagan iconography in the

⁴⁷ McCown (1922).

⁴⁸ Pagan iconography also disappears at other pottery production centres, for instance at Athens: Karivieri (2001) 196. Figurines also disappear in Egypt at this time: Bangert (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ The common image of Dionysus disappears from art after the 6th c., only to return in the 11th c., with the sole purpose of illustrating the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos (Kazhdan, Cutler and Talbot (1991) 631.

⁵⁰ Buckton (1994) 13; Elsner (1995) 253, 266–70.

⁵¹ Elsner (1998) 223.



Fig. 15 *Oinophoros* depicting two doves flanking a central *kantharos*, found at the Domestic Area (inv no. SA2002DA1/106) and dated to the late 6th to 7th c. (Sagalassos archive).

course of the 6th c. A.D., can perhaps be explained by what Robert Markus has described as the shift from 'ancient' to 'medieval' Christianity.⁵² The efforts of the emperor Justinian to impose uniformity of culture, religion and law on an orthodox Christian empire may also have played a role.⁵³ But whatever the cause, by the 7th c. in Sagalassos, as elsewhere, the earlier fusion of Christianity and classical traditions had gone, to be replaced by a simpler and more universally Christian material culture.

CONCLUSION

This short survey of the domestic material culture of Sagalassos from the 4th to the 7th c. highlights once again the religious complexity of late antique society. Paganism and Christianity coexisted in the lives of many, and conversion was not always a straightforward sequential experience of moving from one set of beliefs to another. Yet the late antique period witnessed the gradual transformation of the Roman empire into a Christian empire. The *instrumentarium domesticum* that has been examined here offers a largely neglected means to trace this transformation and to study the interaction of pagan and Christian images and practices within the daily lives of the inhabitants of an important, but by no means exceptional, late antique city.

During the 4th c. Christian iconography, known above all from the Roman catacombs, had no parallel in wider material culture, which continued to be dominated by the pagan tradition. Secular, pagan and Jewish images were adapted to Christian purposes, but symbols or words attesting explicitly to Christian identity are lacking, perhaps because the Christian communities in the East were still simply too few in numbers to produce a dominant visible culture. It was only once Christianity was thrust into the role of religion of the empire that mass-produced goods proclaiming Christian identity followed. This recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman empire at the end of the 4th c. affected people's need for art and material culture as individuals acquired a new Christian identity. It does not necessarily follow that all those who owned or used these

⁵² Markus (1990).

⁵³ Whitby (1991); Maas (2000) 20–21.

Christianised artefacts were themselves Christian, but the appearance of such items must be indicative of a profound religious change in society. The prominence of religiously charged symbols such as fishes and crosses, as well as Biblical scenes on decorated pottery from the late 4th c. suggests an active religious message rather than ornamentation, as does the contrasting emphasis on Dionysiac imagery on Sagalassos pottery wares in the same period.

In the 5th c., the expansion of Christian material culture did not mark a complete break with traditional pagan iconography or practice. Older pagan prototypes were reinterpreted to serve Christian ends, a process particularly visible through the domestic wares and terracotta figurines of Sagalassos, which reflect the continuing use of existing images and customs in the daily lives of both pagans and newly converted Christians. The Church may have defeated the gods but it had not defeated the force of religious habit in its own congregation, habits taken directly from the non-Christian past. It was therefore inevitable that Christianity would be influenced by the pagan culture it was trying to convert, and, as suggested by Elsner, some within early Christianity may well have tried to make their faith accessible through these assimilations with paganism.⁵⁴

It is rarely possible to determine whether the surviving images of pagan deities such as Dionysus are expressions of actual religious belief, but pagan worship certainly continued throughout the 5th c. in many cities of the eastern Mediterranean, and it is tempting to see this survival reflected, at least in part, in the residual iconography. By the 6th and 7th c., these openly pagan scenes had disappeared. Christian motifs and iconography now dominated the material culture, with older symbols 'subsumed into a Christian religious dispensation' as part of the shift to a fully Christian empire.⁵⁵

The late antique transformation of the pagan Graeco-Roman world into a Christian empire stands as one of the most radical cultural revolutions in world history, yet it did not necessarily seem so at the time. The evidence from Sagalassos surveyed here provides a further reminder of the many elements of continuity that facilitated the transformation, and of the adaptation of Christianity to local circumstances

⁵⁴ Elsner (1998) 220.

⁵⁵ Elsner (1998) 51.

and indigenous religious customs. The study of the domestic material culture of a single city or region thus offers insights into the religious mentality of the late antique world, which aids us in better understanding the final stages of paganism and its heritage in the formation of early Christianity.

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ABSTRACTS IN FRENCH

EUSÈBE DE CÉSARÉE ET LE CONCEPT DE PAGANISME

Peter van Nuffelen

On rejette souvent le terme de «paganisme» au motif qu'il reflète le désir des chrétiens de projeter une unité factice sur la multiplicité des religions antiques. Bien que cela soit dans une certaine mesure exact, cet article soutient que les philosophes du Haut-Empire attribuaient déjà une unité fondamentale à toutes les religions, et que les apologistes chrétiens partirent de ces idées pour formuler leur propre concept de paganisme. La création de ce concept devrait donc être considérée comme un processus dialectique, et non comme une projection unilatérale.

LE PAGANISME DE L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE :

UNE ADAPTATION SOUS LA CONTRAINTE

Béatrice Caseau

Dans cet article, l'auteur examine les manières dont les adorateurs des anciens dieux s'adaptèrent au nouvel ordre du monde romain en voie de christianisation. À partir du 4^{ème} siècle, les empereurs attaquèrent systématiquement l'infrastructure religieuse païenne, à travers diverses constitutions impériales qui visaient la divination, le financement des temples et, finalement, leur fermeture définitive. Toutes les formes de culte public furent interdites ce qui conduisit à une privatisation du culte païen. Puis lorsque la liberté de conscience fut aussi abolie, la solution fut d'opter pour une pratique secrète ou cryptopaganisme, laquelle se révèle moins détectable dans les données archéologiques.

LA FIN DU PAGANISME DES SÉNATEURS ROMAINS

David M. Gwynn

Durant les dernières décennies du 20^{ème} siècle s'est opéré un changement majeur dans la manière dont les chercheurs abordent l'étude du paganisme du 4^{ème} siècle et du début du 5^{ème} siècle, au sein d'un

Empire romain de plus en plus chrétien. Les approches anciennes qui mettaient l'accent sur le déclin et le conflit interreligieux ont été remises en cause par la prise de conscience de la vitalité et la diversité du paganisme tardo-antique ainsi que de ses interactions religieuses et sociales avec le christianisme. Le but de ce court article est de réévaluer l'impact de cette nouvelle approche, particulièrement sur notre compréhension du paganisme des élites sénatoriales occidentales, et le rôle que la culture matérielle a joué et continue de jouer dans le dévoilement de l'univers religieux complexe de l'Antiquité tardive romaine.

LES TEMPLES DANS LA GAULE DE L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE

Penelope J. Goodman

Les sources littéraires insistent sur le rôle joué dans la mort des temples païens de la Gaule par les iconoclastes et par les constructeurs d'églises chrétiennes. Mais les sources archéologiques brossent un autre tableau : les fouilles suggèrent que la plupart du temps, les temples ont été volontairement abandonnés à partir de la fin du 3^{ème} siècle. Cela était peut-être lié aux bouleversements militaires de l'époque, mais aussi, indirectement, à des facteurs tels que les difficultés financières des élites et le changement de leurs priorités. D'un autre côté, l'adoption du christianisme comme religion impériale et le début de l'hostilité officielle envers le paganisme ont eu peu d'impact, car au moment où leurs effets se firent sentir, l'âge d'or de l'architecture sacrée païenne en Gaule était passé.

FANA, TEMPLA, DELUBRA DESTRUI PRAECIPIMUS:

LA FIN DES TEMPLES DANS L'ESPAGNE ROMAINE

Javier Arce

On trouve dans le Code Théodosien une série de lois impériales (16.1) qui visent à supprimer les sacrifices païens et à faire disparaître les statues de culte durant le 4^{ème} siècle. En même temps, d'autres lois impériales déclarent que les bâtiments de culte eux-mêmes doivent être entretenus dans les cités, pour leur valeur emblématiques et leur utilité. Cet article cherche à analyser le problème de la fin des temples païens en Hispanie, en usant de toutes les sources disponibles, qu'elles soient littéraires, archéologiques ou législatives. Il arrive à la conclusion que les temples ne furent pas transformés en églises, ou bien ne le

furent qu'à partir du 6^{ème} ou 7^{ème} siècle. Certains furent abandonnés au 4^{ème} siècle, d'autres furent convertis en maisons ou réemployés autrement. C'est seulement à partir du 5^{ème} siècle que l'on trouve des preuves archéologiques de l'utilisation de *spolia* venant de temples hispaniques dans d'autres bâtiments.

LE TEMPLE DE FLORA OU VÉNUS PRÈS DU CIRQUE MAXIME

ET LA NOUVELLE TOPOGRAPHIE CHRÉTIENNE:

LE «RENOUVEAU PAÏEN» EN ACTION ?

Michael Mulryan

Cet article soutient que l'on peut percevoir, plutôt qu'un «renouveau», la continuité et la persistance des traditions païennes à Rome durant le 4^{ème} siècle, à travers les données archéologiques, littéraires et calendaires. Des bâtiments religieux païens continuent d'être réparés à Rome dans la 2^{ème} moitié du 4^{ème} siècle, notamment un temple de Flora ou de Vénus situé près du Cirque Maxime. Des temples de ce genre étaient le lieu de fêtes religieuses qui avaient toujours lieu au 4^{ème} siècle et ils attestent de la continuité des traditions païennes dans le centre de Rome. Cette zone de la Ville abritait d'autres festivités païennes qui perduraient, et il semble que la construction d'une nouvelle église chrétienne en son sein n'ait pas changé la situation. Peut-on y voir l'indice d'une coexistence pacifique des bâtiments chrétiens et païens dans l'Occident latin ?

LE DESTIN DES TEMPLES D'AFRIQUE DU NORD.

Gareth Sears

Cet article examine les changements qui ont affecté les temples d'Afrique du Nord durant l'Antiquité tardive, en utilisant les données archéologiques, appuyées au besoin par l'épigraphie et les textes. Il se concentre sur les problèmes archéologiques, en particulier la datation de la transformation de sites religieux païens en sites chrétiens. Cet article s'intéresse aux indices de la préservation de l'héritage païen jusqu'au milieu du 4^{ème} siècle et aux tentatives de protection des temples, sous couvert de conservation à visée esthétique et de préservation de bâtiments antiques. Il suggère que c'est seulement avec la conquête byzantine du 6^{ème} siècle qu'eut lieu une destruction généralisée des temples, dont les matériaux furent incorporés dans des fortifications ou dont les vestiges furent convertis en églises chrétiennes.

LE PAGANISME TARDIF ET LA CHRISTIANISATION EN GRÈCE.

Helen G. Saradi, avec la contribution de Demetrios Eliopoulos

L'archéologie révèle l'existence d'un paganisme tardif en divers sites de Grèce, principalement grâce à des inscriptions, des pièces de monnaie et des céramiques. Cet article examine les indices de cas de conversion précoce au christianisme, la persistance du paganisme à Athènes grâce aux philosophes néoplatoniciens et la préservation de temples athéniens due à la vigueur des traditions culturelles de la cité et au respect porté à son passé prestigieux. On rencontre d'autres manifestations d'un paganisme tardif dans le centre païen international d'Eleusis qui attirait les élites, dans un faubourg d'Athènes où le taurobolium était encore pratiqué, dans des grottes, des fontaines, des puits et des résidences particulières où l'on célébrait des cultes et sur des sites où des temples avaient été détruits. Cet article examine également la conversion de temples en églises, la destruction des statues païennes ou leur conservation pour des raisons esthétiques et l'incorporation de symboles païens dans les églises.

LE PAGANISME TARDIF DANS LES ÎLES DE LA MER ÉGÉE

ET LES PROCESSUS DE CHRISTIANISATION.

Georgios Deligiannakis

Cet article présente des études de cas détaillées portant sur le paganisme égéen et la conversion de temples dans six sanctuaires de la Province des Îles, en les replaçant dans le contexte du débat sur le mouvement de christianisation de l'Asie mineure vers la Grèce continentale. Cet article soutient qu'en dépit de multiples similarités entre les îles orientales et la côte occidentale d'Asie mineure, les nombreuses subdivisions de cette vaste région ne partagent pas tout à fait la même culture.

LE SORT DES TEMPLES EN ANATOLIE DURANT L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE.

Peter Talloen et Lies Vercauteren

Lorsque le christianisme prit le dessus au cours du 4^{ème} siècle, les temples n'étaient plus les centres animés d'activités rituelles qu'ils avaient été. Les données limitées que nous possédons ne nous permettent pas d'établir une chronologie précise des dernières phases

(de la vie) des temples en Asie mineure. Néanmoins, les exemples ici présentés permettent d'en tracer un schéma approximatif. De plus, ils démontrent que le sort des temples pendant l'Antiquité tardive ne peut être réduit à la destruction ou à la conversion en églises. Cela dit, la préservation du paysage sacré par la conversion *in situ* de temples a bien joué un rôle crucial dans la christianisation de l'Asie mineure durant l'Antiquité tardive.

LE SORT DES TEMPLES D'ÉGYPTE DURANT L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE

Jitse H.F. Dijkstra

Le sort des temples d'Égypte durant l'Antiquité tardive a souvent été perçu à travers l'écran des sources littéraires chrétiennes, lesquelles donnent une image dramatique de la destruction de temples et de leur conversion en églises. Lorsque l'on observe les autres types de sources disponibles en Égypte (inscriptions, papyri et vestiges archéologiques), il devient tout à fait clair que le sort des temples fut en général beaucoup moins dramatique. Cet article soutient que pour se faire une idée plus fiable et plus complexe du sort des temples, il vaut mieux les étudier au sein d'un contexte local ou régional et à partir de sources diverses, tout particulièrement des vestiges matériels. Une étude de cas, portant sur la région de la première cataracte dans le Sud de l'Égypte, confirme que les manifestations de violence contre les temples et leur conversion en églises étaient bien exceptionnelles.

DES TALISMANS POLITIQUES? LES STATUES PAÏENNES ENCORE PRÉSENTES
DANS LES ESPACES PUBLICS DE L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE

Luke Lavan

Cet article examine le sort de certaines statues de divinités et de héros païens qui étaient exposées, non dans des temples, mais dans les rues, les places et les bâtiments publics. Ces statues avaient un lien fonctionnel avec les cérémonies civiques qui avaient lieu dans ces endroits, particulièrement avec les activités politiques. Cet article tente de déterminer dans quelle mesure ces liens fonctionnels furent maintenus, ou interrompus, durant l'Antiquité tardive. Le sort de statues de la Victoire, de Tychè, de Minerve, de héros et d'empereurs, vivants comme morts, est ici examiné. On peut détecter des tentatives de la part de

chrétiens de transformer leur usage, mais elles semblent avoir eu peu d'impact jusqu'au milieu du 6^{ème} siècle. L'auteur tente de dresser des hypothèses concernant la signification du choix de préserver certaines statues, qui ont peut-être survécu en tant que «talismans» politiques en des époques troublées.

INTOLÉRANCE RELIGIEUSE ET STATUAIRE PAÏENNE.

Béatrice Caseau

Un certain nombre de statues de divinités ou d'empereurs nous sont parvenues parce qu'elles furent intentionnellement enterrées durant l'Antiquité tardive. Certaines, parmi elles, ont été bien conservées, tandis que d'autres ont été mutilées. Des statues endommagées par leur chute durant un séisme et furent ensevelies sous les décombres ; d'autres furent délibérément mutilées avant d'être intentionnellement enterrées mais inversement certaines statues sont restées intactes car elles avaient été soigneusement cachées. Des différentes manières dont les statues furent ensevelies, on peut déduire un large éventail de motivations et un rapport complexe à la statuaire antique.

LES RITUELS RELIGIEUX LIÉS AUX SOURCES
PENDANT L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE ET LE HAUT MOYEN ÂGE.

Eberhard W. Sauer

Savoir dans quelle mesure la vénération des sources survécut à la christianisation de l'Empire romain a fait l'objet de nombreuses controverses parmi les spécialistes. Ceux-ci ont principalement concentré leur attention sur les informations fournies par les écrivains ecclésiastiques et la législation médiévale. Cet article examine ce que pourrait apporter une analyse systématique des données archéologiques, notamment des pièces de monnaie. Il prend en compte une série de découvertes importantes qui n'ont jamais été étudiées dans cette perspective auparavant. Il y a de nombreuses preuves d'une vénération des sources répandue au sein de l'Empire et au-delà, au moins jusqu'à la fin du 4^{ème} siècle. Cependant, après 400 après J.-C., des changements dans les rituels associés aux sources rendent plus difficile la possibilité de confirmer ou infirmer la continuité de ce culte.

LES PUITS ET LES SYSTÈMES DE CROYANCE À LA FIN
DE LA PÉRIODE ROMAINE DE LA GRANDE-BRETAGNE :
UNE ÉTUDE DE CAS À LONDINIUM.

James Gerrard

La découverte récente à Drapers' Garden (Londres) d'un large trésor de vaisselle en alliage de cuivre, en étain et en fer, dans un puits de la fin du 4^{ème} ou du début du 5^{ème} siècle, souligne le rôle joué par les puits et les fossés dans la rites tardo-antiques. L'observation du contenu de ce puits révèle que ces récipients n'ont pas été cachés là en période de crise, mais ont été soigneusement placés à côté d'objets rituellement 'tués' et d'un jeune cerf démembré, dans un acte rituel complexe. Cet article tente d'explorer sa signification.

DU PAGANISME AU CHRISTIANISME :
L'ICONOGRAPHIE RELIGIEUSE DANS LA CULTURE
MATÉRIELLE DE SAGALASSOS

Peter Talloen

Des objets domestiques provenant de Sagalassos (Sud-Ouest de la Turquie) et porteurs d'une imagerie d'inspiration religieuse sont ici observés pour retracer l'impact de la révolution religieuse de l'Antiquité tardive sur la vie quotidienne. L'auteur étudie également la manière dont ces objets reflètent des changements plus vastes dans le passage d'une culture païenne à une culture chrétienne. Après une période caractérisée par un répertoire iconographique commun aux païens et aux chrétiens, durant laquelle l'influence du christianisme sur la culture matérielle est limitée, le changement de l'atmosphère religieuse s'exprime davantage dans les objets à partir de la seconde moitié du 4^{ème} siècle, résultant finalement en une iconographie chrétienne canonique.

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by Aoife Fitzgerald

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LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

Series Editor

LUKE LAVAN

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